Flowers of Mary.

Rev. Louis Gemminger.

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

FLOWERS OF MARY.

ADDRESSES

IN HONOR OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY,
DELIVERED AT INGOLSTADT, MAY, 1858,

—BY—

LOUIS GEMMINGER,

Then Pastor of St. Peter's Church, Munich.

Translated from the Fourth German Edition,

—BY—

A BENEDICTINE SISTER.

With the Approbation of the Bishop.

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St. Mary's, Elk Co., Pa., *November* 20, 1893.

"Flowers of Mary," is a translation of the 4th edition of L. Gemminger's May Devotions, "Marienblumen."

I have compared the translation with the German original, from beginning to end, and found it to be a faithful translation. As far as I can see, they contain nothing objectionable.

P. Remigius, M. O. S. B.

St. Mary's, *February* 17, 1894.

Having read, with more than ordinary care, "The Flowers of Mary," translated from the German of Ludwig Gemminger, I do not hesitate to pronounce it a pious and edifying work, suitable for public reading at May Devotions.

P. Innocent Andelfinger, O. S. B.

DEDICATION.

Sweet Heavenly Maid, these gifts I bring
An offering from our bowers,
Oh, may they by their beauty sing
Thy praise, sweet Queen of flowers!

'Tis love that called them forth from earth,
The greeting of true loyal hearts;
May they be sweet in scent and worth,
We've gathered them from many parts.

Oh, may they bloom with faith and love
When storms and tempests rise;
Like Olive-branch of Noah's dove,
The Herald prove of sunny skies.

And may this wreath bind hearts to thee
In love and faith each day;
Thy servants then shall glory see,
When earth has passed away.

I lay this garland humbly down
Before thy throne above,
Sweet Mother, deign my work to crown,
I crave it of thy love.

PREFACE OF THE TRANSLATOR.

A few years ago when the German edition of this little book first made its appearance in public, it produced a deep impression upon its readers. For more than a year, the thought constantly recurred to me, how much good might result in honor of the exalted Queen of Heaven if it were published in the English language; more especially as the addresses are convincing and simple; while the language graceful and animated, speaks eloquently to the pious heart. Therefore I thought the book to be one of devotion for those people who speak the English language. That it may become properly such, I added to the addresses the Litany of Loretto, together with some other prayers suitable for the beautiful month of May.

O holiest, sweetest Advocate, great Queen of Heaven! deep as the ocean in suffering, exalted and incomprehensible in joy, "Deep calleth on deep," "Abyssus abyssum invocat," Ps. 41, at thy feet I lay this little book in silent homage; do with it what pleaseth thee. Every sinner is permitted humbly to approach thee. Thou wilt then surely not despise the poorest of thy children with her little gift. Dear book, go forth now into the world, knock at the door of all hearts, and by thy sweet influence may the "Ave Maria" often be

heard arising in gentle accents from the hearts of the rich and the poor. May the image of our beloved Lady and Queen ever shine forth in the hearts of all, and with the divine image of Jesus Crucified, be the chief ornaments of their homes.

O dearest of all Mothers, O mystical Rose! grant that in our poor hearts the roses of holy love may not only bud, but develop into beautiful flowers of virtue. Thou Flower of Sharon, and Lily amongst thorns! refresh the arid hearts of thy children and after this our exile is ended, show unto us Jesus thy Divine Son.

St. Joseph's Convent,
St. Mary's, Elk Co., Pa.

Feast of St. Gertrude, A. D. 1893.

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PRAYERS.

Prayer.

O Most blessed Virgin Mary! we are here assembled before thy altar, to show thee our love and veneration. We rejoice at the great dignity and glory which the Almighty has bestowed upon thee. We honor and praise the Lord! because He has given thee to us as our mother! because He has adorned thy most pure and holy heart with the most perfect love. To thee, O holy Virgin! we dedicate this month, and especially this day. To thee we consecrate our bodies, our hearts and our souls. In thy hands we place all our hopes and consolations; all our trials and afflictions. To thee we recommend our whole life and especially its end! Show that thou art our mother. We also recommend to thee the whole Catholic Church, and especially our holy Father, Pope Leo, all bishops, priests and religious, our relations and benefactors, our friends and enemies, also the suffering Souls in Purgatory. May thy loving heart find joy in our songs of praise, and in our prayers. We unite them both with the praises and petitions offered to thee by all pious Christians during this month, and with the canticles

which the angels and saints of heaven offer to thee, their most amiable Queen. Obtain for us the greatest of all graces, that we may faithfully serve thee and thy Son to the end of our lives, and that we may then enjoy the inexpressible happiness of loving and thanking thee, with all the angels and saints in heaven! and that in union with thee we may love and adore Jesus, thy Son, and the most Blessed Trinity forever. Amen.

Litany of the Blessed Virgin.

Lord, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us.
God the Father of heaven, *have mercy on us.*
God the Son, Redeemer of the world, *have mercy on us.*
God the Holy Ghost, *have mercy on us.*
Holy Trinity, one God, *have mercy on us.*
Holy Mary,
Holy Mother of God,
Holy Virgin of Virgins,
Mother of Christ,
Mother of divine grace,
Mother most pure,
Mother most chaste,
} *Pray for us.*

Mother inviolate,
Mother undefiled,
Mother most amiable,
Mother most admirable,
Mother of our Creator,
Mother of our Saviour,
Virgin most prudent,
Virgin most venerable,
Virgin most renowned,
Virgin most powerful,
Virgin most merciful,
Virgin most faithful,
Mirror of justice,
Seat of wisdom,
Cause of our joy,
Spiritual Vessel,
Vessel of honor,
Singular Vessel of devotion,
Mystical Rose,
Tower of David,
Tower of ivory,
House of Gold,
Ark of the covenant,
Gate of Heaven,
Morning star,
Health of the sick,
Refuge of sinners,
Comforter of the afflicted,
Help of Christians,
Queen of Angels,

Pray for us.

Queen of Patriarchs,
Queen of Prophets,
Queen of Apostles,
Queen of Martyrs,
Queen of Confessors,
Queen of Virgins,
Queen of all Saints,
Queen conceived without original sin,
Queen of the most holy Rosary,
} *Pray for us.*

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, *spare us, O Lord.*

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, *graciously hear us, O Lord.*

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, *have mercy on us.*

Christ hear us, *Christ graciously hear us.*

Ant. We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God, despise not our petitions in our necessities; but deliver us always from all dangers, O glorious and blessed Virgin.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts; that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ Thy Son, was made known by the message of an Angel, may, by His Passion and Cross, be brought to the glory of His Resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

V. Pray for us, O holy St. Joseph.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

Assist us, O Lord, we beseech Thee, by the merits of the spouse of Thy most holy Mother, that what of ourselves we are unable to obtain, may be granted to us by His intercession, who livest and reignest, world without end. Amen.

Memorare.

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary! that never was it known that any one who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, and sought thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of Virgins, my mother! To thee I come; before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O mother of the Word incarnate! despise not my petitions, but, in thy mercy, hear and answer me. Amen.

Salve Regina.

Hail Holy Queen! Mother of Mercy: our life, our sweetness and our hope! to thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to thee we sigh, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then, O gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy upon us; and after this, our exile, is ended, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Prayer to St. Joseph.

To thee, O blessed Joseph, we have recourse in our affliction, and, having implored the help of thy thrice holy Spouse, we now with hearts filled with confidence earnestly beg thee also to take us under thy protection. By that charity, wherewith thou wert united to the Immaculate Virgin, Mother of God, and by that fatherly love, with which thou didst cherish the Child Jesus, we beseech thee and we humbly pray, that thou wilt look down with gracious eye upon that inheritance which Jesus Christ purchased by His blood, and wilt succor us in our need by thy power and strength.

Defend, O most watchful guardian of the Holy Family, the chosen offspring of Jesus Christ. Keep from us, O most loving Father, all blight of error and corruption. Aid us from on high, most valiant defender, in this conflict with the powers of darkness. And even as of old thou didst rescue the Child Jesus from the peril of His life, so now defend God's Holy Church from the snares of the enemy and from all adversity. Shield us ever under thy patronage, that, imitating thy example and strengthened by thy help, we may live a holy life, die a happy death and attain everlasting bliss in heaven. Amen.

Pope Leo XIII.

(*Indulgence of 7 years and 7 Quarantines.*)

FLOWERS OF MARY.

First Day.

The May-Bell.

ONE of the first flowers of spring is the May-bell. Its name typifies its mission. Its first duty seems to be that of calling the other flowers out of the earth and proclaiming to the world the departure of winter. Each stock of the May-bell bears large leaves and a number of snow-white bells, which are very fragrant as well as beautiful.

There is no flower more appropriate for the first day of May, because it is the symbol of devotion reawakened; the type of love reanimated. The month of May is especially consecrated to the honor and love of Mary; although as St. Bernard says, "our whole lives should belong to the Mother of God," yet in this most beautiful month of the year, our devotion should be more lively and our love more ardent.

Therefore, we should, to-day, commence to say with the priest at the altar, "Sursum Corda," "Heaven-

wards the hearts," and this call we should repeat frequently every day of this month, in order to raise our eyes to Jesus, sitting in the lap of His Mother; to turn our hearts, with all their love to Mary, who, during this month in particular, confers and distributes graces. Let us often salute her with the angelic words, Hail full of grace, for when her exiled children repeat this salutation, is it possible that the Blessed Virgin will leave it unrewarded? No, she will thank us for it, and "Mary's thanks are graces," so says St. Epiphanius. Yea, the more frequently we salute her, the more will this month be for us a true spring month in which the most beautiful flowers of virtue will bloom in our hearts.

The May-bell rings; thus also does the Church exhort the faithful, to show special love and devotion to Mary, during the month of May. The pious practice of devoting the month of May to the Blessed Virgin was commenced at Rome, about the close of the last century. Since that time May devotions have spread throughout the whole Catholic world; especially since Pope Pius VII, on the 21st of March, 1815, enriched them with the following indulgences: All the faithful during this month, who alone or in company with others, perform a work of piety in honor of the divine Mother, may gain every day an indulgence of three hundred days, and a plenary indulgence once in this month on the day when being truly penitent, after confession and communion, they shall pray for the intention of his Holiness. These

indulgences may be applied to the relief of the souls in Purgatory. Will we respond to this call of the Church? The May-bell calls on us to imitate the example of those who honor Mary during this month, by offering her not only material flowers, but the choicest flowers of devotion. Thousands are now kneeling in family circles around images and altars adorned with flowers, honoring with prayers of love the Mother of God. Thousands vie with each other in decorating her altars and go daily in large numbers to the churches consecrated to her. In Spain, France, Italy and Germany, the faithful are united in honoring their Mother. Yes, even beyond the seas in those lands, where a few short years ago, the name of Mary was not known, and where the natives lived on the flesh of their conquered enemies; even there we now hear the praises of Mary mingling with the songs of the sea-waves as they wash the shore.— Will we be deaf to the call of so many examples?

The May-bell rings and our own hearts invite us to celebrate the May Devotions. "My heart," says St. Catherine of Genoa, "is cursed earth, that bears only thorns and thistles." We must all say the same when we consider our tepidity, our spiritual weakness, or our frequently broken resolutions. But who can take away this curse? Who other than she who crushed the serpent's head, she whom all generations call blessed, Mary! Let us, therefore, never forget the words of St. Alphonsus, "If you wish to become perfect and strengthened in good, go to Mary."

Will our poor hearts then, neglect to respond to this call? No, even though no reward was promised we willingly, through love alone consecrate to thee, O blessed Virgin, these days of special love and honor. By thy powerful intercession make our hearts white and pure as the May-bell! Rouse us from the slumber of tepidity to a fresh glowing love towards thee. Help us that we may rouse others, through our example and prayers, out of the night of their sins to a better life. Grant that we may say in truth with the Spouse in the Canticles: "The winter is now past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers have appeared in our land,"[1] the spring-time of thy love and the flowers of all virtues.

The sweet May-bell in woody dell
Is found in early spring;
This flowret fair with tender care
To Mary's shrine we bring.

These bells of May, accept we pray
O Queen and Virgin dear!
And may they prove to you the love
We bring you, is sincere.

O may each heart, with purest art,
As first poor bells of May;
By good deeds done lead others on
To leave sin's thorny way.

[1] Cant., II, 11, 12.

SECOND DAY.

The Sunflower.

The Sunflower, with its large, black disk and golden rays, having this peculiar quality of raising its head with the rising of the sun, keeping steadily turned towards it, and drooping with its setting, is appropriately called the symbol of faith.

Faith constantly turns its gaze towards the sun of Divine love. Heaven it is that gives it vigor and the more this light withdraws, the weaker and more languid it becomes. Abraham is extolled in Holy Scriptures on account of his faith; but Mary is still greater than he. The holy Fathers say, that the ever blessed Virgin had more faith than all men and angels together. St. Elizabeth greeted the divine Mother with these words, "Blessed art thou that hast believed."[1] So we should also praise her faith, and call her the heavenly Sunflower, the most beautiful emblem of faith.

THE SUNFLOWER TURNS INVARIABLY TOWARDS THE SUN, and Mary always turned her believing eyes towards the beginning and end of her faith, Jesus Christ. From the cradle to the grave she looked upon Him. She contemplated a poor little babe in the stable of Bethlehem and believed that He was the Creator of heaven and earth. She saw Him

[1] Luke, I, 45.

despised and dying on the cross, and remained standing under it, which, according to St. Antoninus, was affected by her firm belief in the divinity of Jesus, which was never shaken in her heart. Let us also with Mary look constantly and lovingly on Jesus; let us often contemplate the Crucifix with eyes of faith; then our faith will become more firm, and our life will be a life of faith. "The just man liveth by faith."[1]

The Sunflower Raises its Head with Joy as Soon as the Sun Appears in the Heavens; and Mary found her joy in faith. No sooner had Elizabeth proclaimed Mary blessed because she had believed, than she in holy ecstasy intoned that Canticle of joy, "My soul doth magnify the Lord!"[2] In like manner, we should rejoice in the thought of being children of the true Church: a thought that at the hour of death filled the saints with inexpressible consolation. In crosses and sufferings there is no more consoling remembrance than that of being children of a mother in whose bosom it is good to live and to die, as St. Francis of Sales says.

The Sunflower Follows Gratefully the Light that gives it heat and strength, and droops its head sadly when the sun disappears. After Jesus was baptized in the Jordan, Mary followed Him everywhere with thanks, according to the testimony of Euthymius. She had served Him faithfully, as

[1] Rom., I, 17. [2] Luke, I, 46.

well in the land of strangers as in her own country; for Him she had labored, over Him she had wept; for Him she suffered and to Him she had prayed without intermission; she had adored Him every morning and evening. It is quite natural that she left her peaceful home to follow in grateful love the blessed footsteps of her Divine Son, when He carried to the nations the light of faith. And finally when He died on the cross, she too, desired to depart from this vale of tears. According to the holy Fathers, faith is the greatest of all graces; we should then in imitation of St. Teresa, never forget to thank God in our morning and evening prayers for this precious gift; and often, after the example of St. Philip Neri, pray devoutly the Apostles' Creed, and show like Mary our gratitude for the grace of faith, by following the Giver of this grace everywhere. Faith teaches us, that Jesus Christ is present in the holy Sacrament. There then we should constantly turn, as the Sunflower turns towards the light of the sun, and whether sleeping or waking, in the house or at work, our hearts and our eyes should ever be directed towards a church where the Blessed Sacrament reposes.

Grant, O holy Virgin, that our faith may resemble thine; then our hearts will resemble the Sunflower. Obtain for us the grace that in every situation of life we may look upon Jesus, and our faith will be strengthened by his example. Grant also, sweetest Mother, that in remembering our holy faith we may

be filled with holy joy, and thus impelled to hasten to Jesus to thank Him for this inexpressible happiness.

The flower that wakens with the sun
And follows him with constant gaze,
Is emblem of that spotless one
Whom men and saints and angels praise.

Oh, may my spirit's inward eyes
Like Mary's e'er be turned above.
To Jesus may my heart e'er rise
In His sweet Sacrament of love.

Third Day.

The Ivy.

The Ivy is a plant with dark green and pointed leaves. It climbs on walls and twines itself around oak trees. On account of its tendency to climb on high and to cling closely to its support, it is the symbol of Hope. The Blessed Virgin said of herself, "I am the mother of holy hope;"[1] therefore she can rightly be compared with the Ivy.

The Ivy Always Seeks a Support. It grows high on trees or walls, and holds itself firmly there. In like manner, we never see Mary alone. She is

[1] Eccl., XXIV, 24.

always near her God, who is at the same time her Son. Jesus is her stay, her help, her counsel and her consolation. In every situation of life she confided and hoped in Him, knowing that those who trust in the Lord shall never be confounded. When she lost Jesus in the temple she did not seek consolation from men, but with firm confidence she hoped that she would again find her dear Son. Neither was she disappointed, for she found the object of her search, her beloved Child.

When Jesus was dying on the cross, Mary did not let herself be carried away by grief, neither did she seek to be consoled by creatures, but quietly and resignedly she hoped in the Lord, who soon after rewarded this confidence by His miraculous Resurrection. So should we, in imitation of Mary, trust in God and not in man. "Whosoever trusts in man," says St. Teresa, "leans upon a broken staff." Let us raise ourselves aloft to the Divine Heart of Jesus, cling to it firmly with the arms of holy hope and childlike confidence, and engrave deeply in our hearts these Divine words: He who trusts in God will not be confounded forever.

THE IVY RETAINS ITS COLOR SUMMER AND WINTER. Unchangeable, likewise, was the hope of the ever blessed Virgin; nothing could shake it for a moment; yea, just at the time when everything seemed to concur to weaken it, she still hoped the more steadfastly. When she saw Jesus poor and forsaken, dying like a malefactor on the cross, she

stood with assured confidence beneath the redeeming Tree, for she hoped firmly and unshakenly, as St. Ambrose says, for the redemption of the world and the salvation of mankind, which she knew was to be accomplished through the death of her Son. We should imitate our Mother by hoping all the more in God, when we have the least to expect from creatures. Hope, says blessed Egidius, is a child of the night, by which he means that it is only a holy, praiseworthy and meritorious virtue, when exercised amid dark and gloomy prospects.

The Ivy is Green. But green is the emblem of hope; so is Mary our hope. From her, rays of hope are spread over the entire world. Wherever the glorious name of her Son Jesus is known and honored, Mary is known and honored as the Mother of Hope. In every situation of life her children turn to her, imploring her intercession, and through her expect help from God. Those only, says St. Bernard, who ever invoked the Blessed Virgin in vain, should cease to praise her excellence. Let us then always take refuge in Mary, who after Jesus is our only hope. Let us not rely on the influence, promises, dignities or riches of men, but in our misfortunes trust in her who can and will help us.

St. Edward, King of England, a true son of Mary, never refused a petition made in her name; neither will Jesus, the best of sons, refuse our petitions when offered by the best of mothers. Thou wilt, then, O ever blessed Virgin, be my refuge in all my neces-

sities. In thee will I trust, and in thee will I hope forever.

The dying oak with Ivy wreathed,
Shows life amid decay;
So hope in Mary brightly burned
When darkest seemed the way.

Firm as a rock, on Calvary's height,
She stood beneath the Cross,
Resigned to give her Son to death,
Though grieving for her loss.

Her gaze was ever fixed on God,
In Him her hope reposed;
She never doubted in her trust
Until her tried life closed.

FOURTH DAY.

Burning Love; or, Chalcedonica.

On a firm, light green stalk we find a number of tiny star-shaped flowers so clustered as to form but one flower, which, on account of its fiery red color, is called Burning Love; and it is considered a fit emblem of love.

If there was ever love on earth just as true and genuine as it was ardent, it was none other than that

which burned in the immaculate heart of Mary. Of her the saints say, that in love of God she surpassed the Seraphim, and that the love of all created beings, compared to hers, must fade as the stars of night vanish when the morning sun appears in the heavens. Therefore, holy Church justly applies to Mary these words: "I am the Mother of fair love,"[1] and places her before us as our model and the most glorious representative of the true love of God. Mary, so resplendent in all virtues, is especially pre-eminent in that which the Apostle calls the most exalted: "But the greatest of these is charity;"[2] wherefore St. Bonaventure admirably salutes her as Queen of Love.

Burning Love has a Bright Red Color, which typifies the flaming fire of love, the ardor of which no obstacle can extinguish, no impediment deter; that devotedness to which nothing seems too hard or too great to bear; that glow of love which is the most inflamed by storms, and which burns the brightest in misfortune. Where can we find more love than that which glows in the holy heart of Mary? Let us contemplate the love of the Mother in the stable of Bethlehem. She tenderly embraces her babe, carefully protects it, and tenderly wraps it in swaddling clothes; and in doing this, says St. Bernard, she also infolds all her maternal love. Again, let us look at her perseverance beneath the

[1] Eccl., XXIV, 24. [2] I Cor., XIII, 13.

Cross; she would not for a moment leave her Child, but lovingly remained there that He might have, at least, that consolation in His inexpressible torment. We may then understand that a love so ardent in the beginning, and increasing more and more until death, can be truly called burning love, and the flower of that name can be compared only to the maternal heart of Mary. Thus, too, should we love God, or since we cannot attain to such exalted love, let us, at least, endeavor to imitate it. This love should consist, not merely in words read from a prayer book, or in sensible devotion, which we sometimes, but only transiently, experience; no, it should be intense, and we should be entirely inflamed with it; it should not shrink from any obstacle; it should urge us to do great things for God, "For the charity of Christ presseth us."[1]

BURNING LOVE HAS STAR-SHAPED BLOSSOMS, and in this respect can be compared to God's holy love, which shines like a star in the dark night of life. That was the star which directed the Blessed Virgin during her whole life, and upon which she looked in every misfortune. As the three Kings were once led to JESUS by a star, so did love, like a star, ever lead Mary again and again to her Divine Child. To us also will the love of God be a star, that will not let us deviate from the right way, but will direct us in the night of adversity, and finally

[1] II Cor., V, 14.

guide us to Jesus in Heaven. The Following of Christ says, "He who loves God with his whole heart will not be elated by prosperity nor dejected in adversity."

Burning Love has Always Many Blossoms United in One Flower; thus the love of God manifests itself to its beloved in many ways. The Blessed Virgin shows her love to Jesus by providing Him with food and clothing, by accompanying Him on his toilsome journeys, and by loving all those who are dear to the Divine Saviour. We should likewise show, in various ways, that the love of God burns in our hearts. We should feed and clothe Jesus in the person of the poor; we should adorn Him with jewels by contributing to the support of His churches, and by decorating His altars; we should love Him by our charity towards all good Christians, and by our veneration for priests and religious who are especially dear to Him. With the desire to do this, we turn to thee, O ever Blessed Virgin Mary, for in truth thy heart resembles the flower Burning Love! Infuse into our cold, empty hearts only one spark of that fire which inflamed thy own, and they will burn with love for God! What can be wanting to us in this vale of tears if through thy powerful intercession we are entirely inflamed with love for God? Every sorrow will pass away, every doubt vanish, and this life will be a heaven on earth. Let us pray to thee not in vain, O heavenly

Burning Love, but mercifully hear our humble supplications.

See Burning Love with colors bright,
And star-shaped flowers, a pleasing sight!
Its very name to all may prove
That it is a type of ardent love.

O Mary! Queen of love most fair,
Deign with our hearts this love to share;
Inflame them with a holy zeal,
That love for God and thee we feel.

O God! may our hearts ne'er traitors be,
But give their first best love to Thee;
While creatures in us interest wake,
Teach us to love them for God's sake.

FIFTH DAY.

The Lily.

Great is the beauty of the Lily with its dazzling white calix, opening towards the heavens. It grows on an upright stem encircled with small leaves, and exhales an extremely delightful odor. Our Lord Jesus Christ, himself, praised its splendor: "Consider the lilies how they grow: they labor not, neither do they spin. And yet I say to you, that not even

Solomon in all his glory, was arrayed as one of these." [1]

By almost all nations and in all ages, this flower has been considered as an emblem of innocence or purity; and it has really so many properties relative to this virtue, that it may very appropriately be styled the portrait of Chastity. St. Ambrose in one of his sermons says: "Who in looking at the lily will not involuntarily think of the virtue of purity, which has found its most glorious and perfect image in Mary?" Therefore the Archangel Gabriel appearing to the Blessed Virgin, is represented with a lily in his hand, to symbolize her ever stainless virginity. Wherefore, the pious legend speaks of the Apostles finding only lilies growing on her grave, but nothing else.

The Lily is White and its clear spotless robe indicates the purity of a soul in a state of innocence. "Mary is the most beautiful lily in the garden of God, for her heart was never sullied by the least sin" (St. Epiphanius). She never committed actual sin, and as our holy faith teaches, she was exempt from original sin. We poor children of men are neither exempt from original sin, nor have we lived without sinning. Alas! in how many hearts is the lily of purity tarnished, crushed or lost? Let us now at least firmly resolve to lead pure lives and detest the vice of impurity; let us reverence the virtue

[1] Math., VI, 28, 29.

of chastity in Mary and all those pure souls on earth, who are endeavoring with all their power to awaken in all minds a love and desire for this holy virtue.

THE LILY ELEVATES ITSELF ABOVE THE EARTH as if to say to us, that the virtue of purity can only bloom in perfection, far away from the tumult and pleasures of the world. So we see that the Blessed Virgin, from her infancy, was ever in the temple, except when in the house of her dear parents, with God, or by the side of her Divine Son. She kept aloof from the world, and as the lily is encircled only by leaves growing from its own stem, Mary was surrounded only by her Jesus, St. Joseph, St. John, St. Mary Magdalene, the Apostles and disciples, souls that like her were of one heart and one mind. If we meditate on this example, we will avoid the world, and especially its dangerous joys and pleasures, which are often snares for innocence and slowly instill the poison of impurity. Let us then associate only with those whose intercourse will tend to strengthen us in virtue, and lead us to love more and more the holy virtue of purity.

THE LILY EMITS A MOST DELICIOUS ODOR, and in this also is a figure of chastity; for this virtue ascends heavenward like an exquisite perfume, and refreshes the Divine Heart so much, that Jesus has promised to poor souls a special reward in these words: "These follow the Lamb whithersoever he

goeth,"[1] and, "They sung as it were a new canticle, before the throne,"[2] and, "Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God."[3] Even while upon earth our Divine Saviour was attracted by the fragrance of this virtue. He chose the most pure Virgin for His Mother, the chaste Joseph for His foster-father, the angelic John for His bosom friend, and innocent children for His most beloved creatures. Of the ever Blessed Virgin the holy Fathers say, we need only look upon her to be inflamed with the love of holy purity; and when in eternity we contemplate her as Queen of Heaven and earth, we will only then understand that her Immaculate purity was as inexpressibly great as her reward and her glory are now. This is another reason for loving holy purity: it makes us more pleasing in the sight of God and man, and exerts a heavenly influence upon all with whom we associate, and in heaven it will obtain for us the highest and greatest reward.

Inflamed and attracted by the unutterable loveliness of thy purity, O Virgin of virgins, we are resolved to serve thee henceforth with chaste bodies and pure hearts; but as there is no virtue so difficult to preserve, none against which the world, the flesh and the devil wages war so continually; therefore, we beseech thee, O heavenly Lily, to obtain through thy powerful intercession that our hearts, like beds of lilies, safe in the midst of thorns, may bloom without

[1] Apoc., XIV, 4. [2] Apoc., XIV, 3. [3] Math., V, 8.

spot around thy maternal heart. Increase in us daily more and more a hatred and disgust for impurity, and inflame us with holy love and great esteem for the great treasure of purity; for, what man loves, he tries to preserve and fears to lose.

O Virgin, as the lily pure,
Great chastity for me procure;
Accept the heart I offer thee
And from defilement keep it free.

O spotless Virgin, undefiled,
Look down from heaven upon thy child,
Inflame my heart with purest love
And teach it how to rest above.

O let me fly from everything
That could this purest virtue sting!
O may my heart a lily be
The heart I give to God and thee.

Sixth Day.

The Rosemary.

Who does not know the lovely Rosemary with its many succulent little leaves of dark-green hue, its blue blossoms, its penetrating scent and bitter taste? In many places it adorns the newly ordained priest

at his first holy mass, as well as the bride on her wedding-day. With it the deceased youth and maiden are decked for burial as their last ornament. In the language of flowers, Rosemary signifies penitence or mortification, that virtue which our Divine Saviour recommends with the words: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.[1]

We are all conceived in sin, and during life we offend God more or less; we must, therefore, strive to obtain Heaven by penitential sentiments and self-abnegation. Not in vain is that sentence of our Divine Saviour: "Unless you do penance you shall all likewise perish."[2] The Virgin Mary was conceived without stain, and during the whole course of her life, never committed the least imperfection; nevertheless, she always practiced this virtue. Attracted by its beauty, she would also serve us as a model in this regard, and make this virtue, which is so essential to sanctification, sweet and pleasing to us, through her example. In her heart, wherein all the flowers of virtue germinated, bloomed also the Rosemary, signifying the virtue of mortification.

Rosemary Has a Dark-Blue Blossom; this color signifies mourning and penance. A pious legend relates of the Blessed Virgin, that she never was seen laughing; that her expression was always earnest, her countenance filled with sorrow. She lived con-

[1] Luke, IX, 23. [2] Luke, XIII, 3.

tinually retired; remote from every noisy pleasure and public enjoyment. Only once, according to the words of Holy Writ, she assisted at a wedding, and then only in company with her Divine Son, in order to practice on this occasion an act of love towards her neighbor. Oh! how ought we to blush, in comparing ourselves to Mary, who without sin or fault, lived such a very mortified life! We who accumulate sin upon sin, deny ourselves nothing, mortify ourselves in nothing, and shudder at every, even the most trifling, sacrifice which the Lord requires of us. —Let us entreat the Virgin Mother of God, that by her intercession with her Divine Son, we may not forget in future, that we shall not be saved without penance; therefore, let us abstain not only from sinful pleasures, but also deny ourselves here and there innocent amusements, and permitted delights for the love of Mary, and as penance for our sins.

As the Rosemary Has on its Stems Many Little Leaves, so has the virtue of mortification many different ways of being practiced. In the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we find so many instances of self-denial, that in this regard we can also compare her most holy heart to Rosemary. To quote some examples; how willingly would she have gone with Jesus, when He went forth to teach, but she remained until He called her.—With what delight would she, after the death of Jesus, have spent her life in absolute retirement, there to await death which

would have united her with God; but she refrained, offering her desire to the Lord, who wished to place her at the head of His Apostles and disciples, as protectress of His infant Church. St. Francis of Sales says, "As love is inventive to show love in various ways to the object beloved; in like manner, the true spirit of penance finds manifold ways to offer an oblation and to make satisfaction for sins." O, if we were only really penetrated with a knowledge of our sinfulness, we would endeavor, in many ways, to practice mortification; the more so, as the occasions for so doing present themselves daily, yes, hourly. How often could we mortify ourselves with regard to talking, looking, eating, drinking, sleeping or watching! Let us address ourselves to the Blessed Virgin, that through her intercession, we may obtain strength to make such sacrifices, and exercise ourselves in mortification in various ways.

Rosemary Has a Bitter Taste, but possesses healthful properties; wherefore, it is also used as medicine. How richly rewarded in Heaven is the motherly heart of Mary, which tasted, while here upon earth, so frequently the bitterness of penance and mortification! Therefore, her example should incite us to practice this virtue most assiduously and cultivate the Rosemary of mortification in the garden of our hearts. Certainly, mortification or self-denial is hard to human nature and its taste bitter like the Rosemary; but like it, also attended with most blessed results. By penance we blot out

our sins, and thus prepare ourselves a glory in Heaven, which will be equal in grandeur and delight to the reward of holy innocence. "O blessed mortification," cried out St. Peter of Alcantara, "which obtained for me such a glory!"

O Mary, when we behold thy sweet, holy and immaculate heart adorned with the Rosemary of mortification and penance, the longing awakens within us to be like thee in this respect! Open our eyes, therefore, we beseech thee that we may see the whole misery of our sinfulness; let us always remember these terrifying words of thy Divine Son, that we cannot be saved without penance. Penetrate us thoroughly with a keen, and lively perception of how the least offence against God, wounds and grieves the Divine Heart of Jesus; then will we live truly penitential lives, and practice mortification by different ways and means, and in considering the great reward of this virtue, we will not fear its bitterness.

Rosemary tells us we should try,
Our sinful flesh to mortify!
Through penance we draw near to God.
And He averts the chastening rod.

O Mary, maid of virtue rare
Soon may my soul thy virtue share!
Yes, heedless of the sacrifice
Which must be made to conquer vice.

By thy example may I strive
At solid virtue to arrive,
Till freed from sin, I once arise
To sing thy praise in Paradise.

Seventh Day.

The Tulip.

The bright-colored Tulip holds itself erect upon a straight firm stem surrounded by somewhat oblong leaves. Its calix closes at night but reopens, as soon as the sun rises. The only thing which this flower lacks is perfume. Although it does not delight the sense of smell, yet it rejoices the eye by its beautiful, variegated dress. In a spiritual sense, the tulip may be compared to prayer, and is therefore, taken as an emblem of this virtue.

When the Archangel Gabriel brought to the Blessed Virgin the glad tidings, that she was to become the Mother of the Most High, he found her absorbed in prayer. As often as we read of Mary in Holy Scripture, we find that she loved prayer. When yet a child, she practiced this virtue, and when she was brought into the temple, she spent the entire day in prayer and work. In her humble home at Nazareth, she frequently prayed, and during the awful passion of her beloved Son, Jesus Christ,

she obtained by prayer, that strength, which enabled her to stand without shrinking beneath the Cross of her dying Son. It was during prayer, that she, with the Apostles, received the Holy Ghost on Pentecost, and in prayer she awaited the consummation of her life. Our Divine Saviour who extremely loved this virtue, incites us to it by the following words: "Watch ye and pray;" [1] and "Watch ye, therefore, praying at all times." [2]

None followed Jesus more faithfully than Mary. With justice could St. Epiphanius say: "The life of Mary was a continual prayer." We also have an obligation to pray, for upon prayer depends our salvation, which we can gain only by persevering in prayer. We should therefore, rejoice to have such a sublime example as Mary, in whose heart bloomed the tulip, the virtue of the love of prayer; and we should frequently contemplate it in order to imitate it.

The Tulip Has its Head Always Directed Toward Heaven. This signifies prayer, which is a colloquy of the soul with God. God is to the soul, what the sun is to nature, its light, its warmth and its life. Therefore, if the Christian prays, he turns toward Heaven, where God abides. God is the King of kings, and Lord of hosts, therefore the Christian prays with reverence and devotion. God is eternal love, and Father of goodness; therefore

[1] Math., XXVII, 41. [2] Luke, XXI, 36.

the Christian prays with love and confidence; and if our prayer were always borne on these two wings of reverence and love, as St. Bernard calls them, it would always obtain its end, and never remain unheard. With what respect did Mary petition her Divine Son at the marriage-feast at Cana! And with what unshaken confidence did she continue her prayer; when it seemed as though Jesus did not heed her petition. "As water is necessary for trees, flowers and plants," says St. John Chrysostom, "even so is prayer necessary for us; for, as the former will dry up for want of sap, so our souls without prayer, like a flower which has not been moistened for a long time, becomes dry and bends towards the earth."

The Tulip Reopens When the Sun Rises, whereas it is closed during the night. Thus the soul, which loves prayer, opens herself only to God and heavenly things; esteems only these; perceives only these; and, with great care, shuts herself up to the night of sin, and to the world, which would deter her from prayer, or make it distasteful to her by distractions. Thus we behold Jesus Christ seeking a solitary place for prayer; yes. "He even left the company of his Apostles, when he wished to pray. The Blessed Virgin Mary also, we find alone at prayer in the temple and at home. Only when duty, good example, or love for her neighbor required it, did she leave the holy retirement of her house. "If you wish to pray well," says St. Francis de Sales, "withdraw as much as possible

from the world; above all do not meddle with matters which are foreign to your calling; for, the more freedom you give yourself in idle talk and useless thoughts before prayer, the more feeble and empty will be your prayer, and the more will you have to suffer from distraction."

THE TULIP EXHIBITS A GREAT VARIETY OF COLORS, and by this, it tells us that prayer, although essentially one, has nevertheless various methods. Spiritual writers, speaking of the different kinds of prayer, divide it into vocal and mental. Among the vocal prayers, the first place is given to the Lord's prayer, which Jesus Christ Himself has taught, and the holy Rosary which the Church has enriched with so many indulgences and treasures of grace, and which the saints so much loved to recite. In regard to mental prayers, by far the most useful and meritorious one is the "Way of the Cross," which we should love so much the more, since the Blessed Virgin Mary herself first went this Way through the streets of Jerusalem, meditating and praying. There are also ejaculatory prayers, which are momentary elevations, or glances, of the soul towards God. A good intention is likewise considered a good prayer, for, by it, all our works, actions and employments are sanctified, and so to speak, changed into prayer. But we should pay particular attention to the admonitions of two great saints of the Church, namely, St. Francis de Sales, who says, that in affliction and adversities, the best

prayer is: "O Lord, Thy will be done:" and St. Alphonsus, who recommends above all, the prayer of petition. He says that, "after holy Communion, we should ask for humiliations; and every evening beg for the grace of final perseverance."

O heavenly Tulip, my most beloved Mother Mary! In your heart burned the love of prayer, and you practiced this virtue to an exalted degree in every circumstance of your life! Obtain for us also the grace, that we may every day comprehend more and more the majesty of prayer, since there can be no greater honor for man, than to speak to his God. Teach us yourself, O Blessed Virgin, how to pray, for you are, according to St. Bonaventure, the teacher of prayer. Oh! if we could only pray as we ought, then we would surely walk in the way of virtue; for St. Augustine says: "Whosoever knows how to pray well, knows also how to live well." Instill into our hearts, O Blessed Lady, a great love for solitude and contempt for this world, that we may not be troubled by distractions during prayer, nor be induced to leave off praying; and when by your powerful intercession with God, you have obtained for us, a sincere love for prayer; then we will pray with joy; we will spend all our spare time in this holy exercise, and thus we will sanctify all our actions, and in prayer we will seek and find our rest and consolation; then will we be able to say with that holy servant of God, Zitta, "Every one must have joy, as for me, I have mine in prayer."

The Tulip's crown, raised high in air,
Reminds us of the voice of prayer;
The humble prayer from earth ascends,
And God, assistance kindly lends.

Blessed Mary knew this holy art,
And from her sinless Virgin heart
The prayer of faith, of hope, of love,
Ascended to the Throne above.

Through life, prayer was her loving task;
At Cana's feast we hear her ask,
And tho' it was before His time,
Her Son changed water into wine.

While now from Heaven she sees our needs,
E'er with that Son for us she pleads,
And prays that we from God ne'er roam,
That so we reach our destined home.

In all our trials may we find
Assistance in this Mother kind;
And when on earth our lives shall close,
May we in Heaven find sweet repose.

Eighth Day.

Mignonette.

Charles IX, King of France, once asked the Poet Tasso who, in his estimation, was the happiest? Tasso without hesitation replied, "God." "Every one knows that," responded the King, "therefore my question does not refer to Him; but who after God is the happiest?" Then Tasso answered: "He who becomes most like to God." Exterior resemblance consists in similarity of features; but interior resemblance, my dear Christians, is the similarity of the will. Whoever wishes what God wishes, and unites his own will entirely to the Divine will, is the most like to God. The emblem of this virtue of resignation to the Divine will is the flower called Mignonette, which name signifies Repose or Rest. This flower, which exhales the sweetest fragrance, is as well known as it is loved, both in the garden and in the house. Oh! would that the virtue it resembles were well known, loved and practiced by all Christians. To this end let us contemplate it attentively, especially in Mary, who by her example also shows herself great in this virtue.

When the Archangel Gabriel descended from Heaven and announced to Mary that she should become the Mother of the Most High, at that supreme moment when heaven and earth hung

expectantly upon her decision, she uttered those words, by which she co-operated in the redemption of the human race: "Be it done to me according to thy word."[1] When she stood beneath the Cross of her dying Son and He gave her, through St. John, to the whole human race as a Mother, then her heart, as St. Bonaventure so beautifully expresses it, though pierced through by a sword of grief, repeated the words: "Be it done to me according to thy word." "Observe the whole life of Mary," cries out St. Bernard, "and you will always find her will united to that of her Divine Son."

THE MIGNONETTE IS INSIGNIFICANT IN APPEARANCE, for it is devoid of brilliant colors. In like manner the virtue which it represents is unostentatious and even hidden, because it has its seat concealed in the heart of the Christian whose will is so united to the Divine will, that they form but one. Resignation necessarily belongs to a cross, and without crossses no man can become holy. Even Jesus Christ when He assumed human nature practiced this virtue, that he might serve as our model. When He suffered His agony and bloody sweat in the garden of Olives He prayed three times, "Father, if Thou wilt, remove this chalice from me; nevertheless, not my will but Thine be done!"[2]

Can we His scholars and disciples exempt ourselves therefrom? We must necessarily have a cross, for

[1] Luke, I, 38. [2] Luke, XXII, 42.

without crosses there can be no virtue whatsoever. Take away the cross and love becomes a natural human affection; take away the cross and hope will not elevate itself above the earth; take away the cross and humility is nothing but vanity; take away the cross and fortitude is weakness. A coin is not considered currency unless an image or inscription be stamped upon it. These impressions which it receives, are, so to speak, its wounds; and they are the things that give it current value. So likewise your virtues, unless stamped with the cross of Christ and His sufferings, are worthless and unacceptable currency for Heaven.

The Mignonette Exhales a Most Fragrant Perfume, which is, as it were, an offering that the flowers present to man to reward him for their cultivation; so the virtue of resignation to the will of God, obtains for the Christian many gifts and graces in return; for example: Peace of Heart: We read that when the Apostles found their ship in a storm, and knew that Jesus slept, they exclaimed in terror, "Lord save us, we perish!"[1] The Master arose, and with a gesture of His hand commanded the winds and the waves, and immediately a great calm ensued; the billows sank; the rain ceased; the blue sky shone out again, and the sun appeared once more. Here the Divine hand is a symbol of resignation to God's will. As soon as you courageously

[1] Math., VIII, 25.

say, with your whole heart, in time of tribulation: "O Lord, thy will be done!" your tears will cease; your lips will utter no more complaints; the fluttering of your heart will cease; peace and blessed tranquillity will return!

ANSWERING OF PRAYER: St. Francis of Sales says, that a single "'Lord, thy will be done,' said in time of misfortune, has more merit, power and value, than a thousand Our Fathers in time of prosperity and quiet."

HEAVENLY CONSOLATION: "Come to me, all you that labor and are heavy laden," says our Lord, "and I will refresh you;"[1] refresh you with consolation which will sweeten all your sufferings. What consolation, to rest with Jesus the Crucified upon the Cross! Wherever you find crosses, you will also find Jesus. He will become united to you through sufferings, and you will become united to Him through patience. In this holy union consists the happiness of this life. He unites Himself with the blessed through joys; He unites Himself with mortals through sorrows and afflictions.

BLESSING OF GOD: In a family, where there is a cross, there is also the Lord Himself, the dispenser of all blessings. An afflicted soul need not ask God for any more blessings, for she has them in the cross. O that all Christians would recognize the countless merits they can acquire by enduring crosses patiently!

[1] Math., XI, 28.

"Such a person," says Blessed Egidius, "is like a tabernacle. I could kneel down before him because he bears within him the living God." A cross is nothing else but an epistle of the Lord to the soul in which is written: "I love thee, I bless thee."

THE MIGNONETTE IS GREEN. Green signifies hope, courage and confidence. He alone loses almost everything who loses courage! But what is it, that encourages us to be resigned to the holy will of God during time of adversity and tribulations? It is carrying our cross in the manner we ought. The first method of so doing, is taught us by Saint Teresa of Jesus, who says: "If you wish to carry your cross with ease, you must not drag it, but lift it up energetically and hasten forward."

The second manner is taught us by a pagan. The highly renowned Solon, a pagan philosopher, once led a friend, who was bowed down with trouble to the highest tower in the city of Athens, whence he pointed out all the magnificent palaces, splendid buildings and warehouses of merchants and exclaimed: "Oh, how many calamities and disquietudes; how many cares and troubles are concealed under these roofs!"

The third mode we are taught by experience. You will never find a family which is so unfortunate that it could not console itself with the thought that there are others which are more so.

The fourth way is taught us by reason, which says: "Why are you grieved? Your misfortune is

not to be inordinately feared. If it is small, then it is easy to be borne; if it is great, it cannot last long.. An evil which is violent cannot continue; if not overcome in any other way, it must succumb of itself, for it takes away the life, or the feelings. Only in hell evil endures forever. Time brings all to an end without your thinking of it. Your pain can not last longer than your life. And what is life compared to eternity."

The fifth manner is taught us by the Eternal Truth, Jesus Christ Himself, who cries out: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."[1] Wonderful to relate, that the cross which causes us to suffer, is our greatest consolation. Behold Mary beneath the cross! All her complaints are silenced; all her lamentations are hushed; all her tears are dried; for she stood beneath the cross. Seek you also your consolation in the Crucified! He calls down to you from the Cross, saying: "Whosoever wants to follow me—and whither?—into eternal glory, into Paradise, into Heaven, let him carry his cross with patience!" Whosoever wishes to become blessed, let him be resigned to the will of God!

Oh! make my life resigned to God,
My dearest, sweetest Mother!
Pray that I bow beneath the rod,
And envy not my brother.

[1] Luke, IX, 23.

Ninth Day.

The Passion-flower.

The name as well as the form of the Passion-flower reminds us of the Passion of Christ. Its white and violet dress indicates mourning and sorrow; the five stamens in its centre, as also the leaf with five divisions, signify the five wounds of Jesus Christ.—The heart of Mary resembles the Passion-flower. How true were those prophetic words which holy Simeon addressed to her in the temple: "And thy own soul a sword shall pierce."[1] After that she could say in truth: "My sorrow is continually before my eyes." When she took her Divine Child into her arms, she thought of how the executioners would one day take Him from her: When she kissed Him, the thought of the traitor's kiss like a sword, pierced her tender heart. When she wrapped the Infant in swaddling clothes, it appeared to her, as though she saw the cords and chains wherewith the Jews would bind the Saviour. When she watched over His sleep, she beheld in spirit the Cross, the last bloody resting place of her Divine Son. Thus the Passion-flower is an emblem of the heart of Mary. She felt the Passion of Jesus, long before He suffered it. When He entered upon it, she accompanied Him,

[1] Luke, II, 35.

and after His sacrifice was consummated, she meditated upon it.

My dear Christians, there is a double Way of the Cross. One we must go, but the other one we ought to go.

After Jesus had Entered upon His Office as Teacher of Mankind, Mary quitted the accustomed duties of her quiet household, to follow her Divine Son in His journeys. She forsook her peaceful home to share the fate of the persecuted Messiah; to follow His blessed footsteps whilst He made known His doctrine to the Jews. After many fears and sufferings, the Blessed Virgin accompanied her Divine Son to the unfortunate city of Jerusalem, there to celebrate the last Paschal-feast. She heard the acclamation of the people at His entrance on Palm Sunday: "Hosanna to the Son of David!"[1] But overlooking the palms, with which his way was strewn, she glanced with tearful eyes, towards the northwest, in the direction of Mount Calvary. The Mother followed, through the streets of Jerusalem, her thorn-crowned Son, bearing a heavy cross upon His mangled and bleeding shoulders. At a turn in the street, she met Him face to face; Oh, what a meeting that must have been! Afterwards St. John and Mary Magdalene did all they could, to keep the Mother back from Golgotha, but their petitions were in vain. Mary summoning all her courage, began

[1] Math., XXI, 9.

the ascent of Calvary. When she had reached the end of her sorrowful journey, she heard the blows of the hammer, as the executioners nailed her Son to the Cross. Who can describe her anguish, when she saw her Son expire upon the ignominious gibbet! as petrified with grief, she stood motionless beneath it. When the Sacred Body was taken down from the Cross, she accompanied it to the Sepulcher, into which it was placed, and the last glance which fell upon it, before the stone closed the tomb, was that of the sorrowful Mother. What else is our pilgrimage through this life, but a way of the cross? Our first utterance, on coming into life, is a cry, which proves that we enter a valley of tears; and our last struggle, on the death-bed, shows that we leave a vale of woe. Our life is a way of the cross with innumerably more stations than fourteen; poverty, sickness, contempt, disregard, ingratitude, family-troubles, interior sufferings, corporal pains, in short, a whole host of miseries embitter our lives. "O blessed wilt thou be," says St. Bernard, "if in thy journey through life, thou follow Jesus, as Mary did; blessed, indeed, if Mary conducts you. In Jesus you will find strength, and in Mary consolation.

Only a single word from Jesus was sufficient to take away the sorrow and affliction of St. Mary Magdalene, as she hastened, sad and deeply grieved, through the garden on the morning of the Resurrection. "Mary!" said the Lord and Master, in the form of a gardener; she looked up; recognized Him,

and oh! what delight, what blessedness filled her soul! Then she hastened off to carry the glad tidings to the Apostles and disciples. Pilgrim on the way of the cross, Christian soul! open the Holy Scriptures, a single word from the lips of Jesus will give you strength to suffer. "Come to me all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will refresh you."[1]

Intercourse with a soul severely tried, gives us wonderful consolation in our afflictions, says St. Bernardine of Sienna. You should, therefore, in the course of your sufferings, often go to Mary, and knock at the door of her heart; that heart which was pierced through with a seven-fold sword, for there you will find a consolation which you will search for in vain among all men on earth. When Mary felt that the Lord would soon call her to Himself, she would fain behold once more her former home, the city of Redemption. She traveled, accompanied by St. John, to the place of sorrows—Palestine. Arrived at Jerusalem, she traversed all its streets, and the road to Golgotha. She visited the judgment hall of Caiphas, and all the places which were sanctified by the sufferings of her Son. She once more ascended Mount Calvary, where her Son had loved us unto death, and contemplated, in spirit, the entire Passion of Jesus Christ.

St. Francis of Assisium, ardently desired to know from God, by what act he could please Him best,

[1] Math., VI, 28.

and opened the Missal with this intention, and the opened page revealed the words: "Passio Domini nostri Jesu Christi," the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. From this his loving heart understood, that God loves nothing better than meditating on the sufferings of Christ.

Therefore, dear Christians, let us frequently and willingly make this second way of the Cross! Let us meditate on the fourteen stations, which the holy Church has enriched with so many graces, indulgences and blessings;—the way of the Cross, which our dearest Mother Mary made first of all, praying and meditating. Do not imagine that it is only a devotion for the holy season of Lent. The life of Jesus Christ was one of continued sufferings. Hence we should very often during life go in spirit the way of his Passion. The remembrance of the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ, should be our first thought in the morning and our last in the evening. Each day we should select one station or any point from the sufferings of our Lord, either His prayer on Mount Olivet, His crowning with thorns, or His scourging, and often during the day, recall to mind that upon which we meditated in the morning. Kissing the crucifix at our bedside should be for us a morning devotion, and recommending ourselves to the five holy wounds, should be our last act in the evening.

If we act thus, our hearts will resemble the Passion-flower. Although this flower has no scent, yet

its symbolic virtue breathes forth a heavenly odor, namely, meditation on the Passion of Christ, which enriches our souls with eternal treasures. St. Bonaventure says: "One can not offer a more pleasing sacrifice to God, greater joy to the angels, nor greater honor to the Blessed Trinity than by exercising himself daily in meditation on the sufferings of Christ." Albertus Magnus says: "A Christian who thinks with sincere affection of the Passion of Christ, though it be only for a short time, has more merit than another one, who without these thoughts should scourge himself to blood, fast on bread and water, or say the entire Psalter." "To meditate upon these sufferings," says St. Bernard, "I call wisdom; in them I find the riches of salvation, and the plenitude of merits; for from them I draw at one time salutary bitterness, at another the sweetest consolation."

Therefore, heavenly Passion-flower, most Blessed Virgin Mary, let us in imitation of thee proceed patiently, during our lives, on our way of the cross with Jesus; and may we say often and willingly, with profound recollection, the stations of the bitter Passion and Death of Jesus Christ. Once, the Blessed Venturino of Bergamo, had engraved on his ring all the instruments of the Passion of Christ, together with these words: "The Cross of the Lord shall be my escutcheon." Let us, likewise, engrave deeply on our hearts, with indelible marks, these words: Christ Jesus suffered for us, was crucified for us, died for us.

O thou Mother, fount of love,
Touch my spirit from above;
Make my heart with thine accord;
Make me feel as thou hast felt;
Make my soul to glow and melt
With the love of Christ my Lord.

Holy Mother, pierce me through;
In my heart each wound renew
Of my Saviour crucified.
Let me share with thee His pain,
Who for all my sins was slain,
Who for me in torments died.

TENTH DAY.

The Balsomine.

St. Ephraim, on visiting the hermit Julian in the desert, accidentally discovered that in his book the holy names Jesus and God, were everywhere either blotted out, or soiled. On being asked the cause of this, Julian answered: "The great penitent, Mary Magdalene, moistened the feet of Jesus with her tears, and I, great sinner that I am, endeavor to moisten the name of Jesus with my tears!" "O tears of repentance," exclaims St. Lawrence Justinian, "thine is the power, thine is dominion!"—And St. John

Chrysostom says: "Your sins are written in the great book; weep for them and they will be effaced, shed tears of regret, and the writing will disappear, so great is the power of penitential tears." The Balsomine, a flower beautiful to behold and of different colors, is the symbol of repentance, a virtue which should find a place in the hearts of all men, no difference what their station in life may be. This flower is odorless, therefore a fit emblem of sorrow for sin; for where there is repentance for sin, the fragrance of the first grace is gone. This plant must be watered very frequently as it requires constant moisture; in like manner the source of tears is the life of real and true contrition.

Oh! how David lamented over his sins! He says: "I will water my couch every night with my tears!"[1] How Peter deplored his fall! Of him it is written: "And going forth, he wept bitterly."[2] St. Pachomius often spent the whole night weeping, and it is stated that the rays of the rising sun frequently beheld him still bathed in tears. St. Margaret of Cortona bewailed her sins to such a degree, that she was in danger of becoming blind on account of her copious tears of regret.—And you, my dear Christians, have you no regret for the misdeeds of your past life? If not, then you know not what a grievous offence to God sin is!—It is the greatest ingratitude, the greatest disobedience, the greatest

[1] Ps., VI, 7. [2] Math., XXVI, 75.

misfortune! If by an untruth we could convert the whole world, we would not be justified in uttering it. The Apostle says that sin is a new crucifixion of Christ. St. Augustine accuses himself of having felt a certain pleasure in eating and drinking, which he did not suppress; with tearful eyes he accuses himself of sometimes having felt greater delight at the melody in singing the psalms, than in the signification of the words. He accused himself of once taking delight in looking at a dog pursuing a hare, and at another time of watching a spider catching flies. Again he accused himself of one day rejoicing too much about the fine weather.—And we? Alas! we do not regret even the mortal sins of our lives, much less the venial sins which we commit through fickleness and through the little care we exert to avoid them; thus they grow to be innumerable, through our own fault. Where then is our regret? Where are our tears? You may answer, "we can not weep." Well then, you must implore this of God; for contrite tears are a grace of God, a gift of Heaven; therefore, holy Church has composed an especial prayer, a litany for this purpose.* Once as St. Lewis was saying it, and came to the words: "O God, grant us a fountain of tears;" he prayed very devoutly: "O my Lord, I venture not to pray for a fountain of tears, grant me only some drops to refresh the aridity of my heart!" If God denies

* *Note.*—I think this is not true.

you the gift of tears, which would relieve your anxiety of heart, and anguish of soul; if your eyes can not shed tears, let your heart, at least, weep by its deep regret for your sins, as long as you live; for an offence against an eternal God, is atoned for only by a life-long sorrow. Repentance should shine through your life like a red thread, woven into a white fabric. It should manifest itself through continual prayer for pardon; through unceasing endeavors to root out evil habits; through a continued feeling of sorrow; and also through penitential tears. Then your heart will be like the flower, Balsomine, and rejoice the motherly heart of Mary. But, my dear Christians, how dare we dedicate the Balsomine, an emblem of repentance, to Mary, who never committed a sin, and consequently, had nothing to regret? Yet, we can do so, because she, as well as her Divine Son, loved the virtue of repentance exceedingly, and rewarded it very highly!

Three times St. Peter denied his Lord saying, "I know him not," and he even confirmed the denial with an oath. Then our Divine Saviour cast upon him one glance which penetrated his soul like a dart, but it was a piercing dart of mercy. He then went out and wept bitterly, and as the holy Fathers assert, he bewailed these sins during his whole life, so that his cheeks became furrowed from continual tears of repentance which he shed. Did the Lord love him any the less because he had sinned? Oh no! But He loved him much more; for He saw how truly

he repented his misdeeds. St. Peter's regret, which was great indeed, was the magnet which attracted the love of the Divine Heart, and held it captive. Christ made him the Head of the Church and prince of the Apostles, and committed to him the keys of the kingdom of Heaven. He was made as firm as a rock, against which the waves of opposition shall dash in vain, and the gates of hell not prevail.

Great were the sins of Mary Magdalene, but when she bathed the feet of our Lord with her tears of contrition, He spoke to her the consoling words: "Thy sins are forgiven thee."[1] How tenderly she loved Jesus! He permitted her to be continually near Him; and, after His Resurrection, He even appeared to her. After the death of Christ, Mary received, into her motherly arms, the penitent Magdalene, who poured upon that pure and merciful bosom, tears of repentance. The Immaculate Virgin welcomed her lovingly to her sacred embrace, and ever after in the heart of this true penitent bloomed the lovely flower of repentance which opens its calix to Heaven. Magdalene, who had followed Mary across the sea, to Asia Minor, was allowed to die in her arms, and Mary bewailed her, as Jesus had bewailed Lazarus. Thus the virtue of repentance is loved by Jesus and Mary. Should we not therefore, make it the virtue of our lives? the more so, because its reward is so great.

[1] Luke, VII, 48.

"I will remember his iniquities no longer," says our Blessed Lord. And again, "There shall be joy in Heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance." [1] "What conquers the invincible, what vanquishes the Conqueror of all things?" exclaims St. Chrysostom; "it is the tears of repentance, it is contrition for sin! If the Lord sees this sorrow He cannot but forgive."

St. Francis of Sales relates that in his time a detestable custom prevailed among the students of Padua, namely, that they went armed through the streets at night, halting passers-by with the cry: "Who goes there?" Whosoever did not answer to suit them, was attacked. A student who was crossing the street and did not reply to this challenge was killed. The murderer sought refuge in the house of a widow, whose son was his friend and fellow student. In the most touching words he besought the woman, to whom he confessed his crime, to conceal him in her house. Accordingly the compassionate widow concealed him in a remote closet. Presently her own and only son was brought home a corpse; he had been murdered. The woman knew only too well who the murderer was. Weeping and lamenting she went to him, saying: "Oh! what did my son do to you, that you murdered him so cruelly!" Hearing that it was his dearly beloved friend, whom he had killed, the assassin broke forth

[1] Luke, XV, 7.

in loud cries; and, instead of craving forgiveness of this good mother, he cast himself at her feet and conjured her to deliver him up to justice, that he might, publicly, atone for his great crime. The afflicted mother, who was a true Christian, was so moved at the repentance of this youth, that she said: "If you ask God to forgive you, and promise to amend your life, I will set you at liberty." She kept her word, and the youth making the required promise, was set at liberty. My dear Christians, if an earthly mother did this, how much more will the heavenly Mother Mary do for us, the offenders and murderers of her beloved and only Son, if we penitently and contritely seek refuge in her mild and merciful heart. She will then appear with us at the judgment seat, not as our accuser, but as our advocate. She will step before the Throne of the eternal Judge, who is at the same time her Son, and speak thus: "For the contrition, the sorrow and the tears of this sinner, have mercy upon him, and show him compassion." Then our merciful Lord will forgive and reward this repentance on account of the intercession of His blessed Mother, and will give Heaven in exchange. The penitent sinner will sing in eternity with David: "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."[1] "Thou hast turned my mourning into joy, thou hast cut my sack-cloth, and hast compassed me with eternal gladness."[2]

[1] Ps. CXXV, 5. [2] Ps. XXIX, 12.

Therefore, O dearest Mother Mary, make that our hearts become Balsomines; hearts moistened by tears of repentance, filled with contrition that will last during our whole life; so true and sincere that your maternal heart, and the heart of your Divine Son, may be moved to love and reward us. Amen.

Sweet Balsomine! it signifies
That penitential tears and sighs
From God our pardon wins.
Then Mary, teach us to repent,
That so God's anger may relent
And He forgive our sins.

ELEVENTH DAY.

The Corn-Flower.

The valiant Max Emanuel, Elector of Bavaria, when besieging Belgrade cried out to his followers, as he boldly led the attack: "Follow me, Bavarians, follow me!" This was an earthly prince; but a heavenly Prince, the King of kings, Jesus Christ, cries out to us, "Follow me!" Let us, dear Christians, obey this summons as punctually as the Apostle Matthew, of whom we are told, that Christ said to him: "Follow me, and he rose up and fol-

lowed him."[1] That we may the better do so, let us consider more closely the imitation of Christ, taking for our emblem the Corn-flower.

This Flower Has a Very Rough Calix, which indicates the difficulties which the imitation of Christ causes to sensual or carnal-minded Christians, as is expressed in these words: "How narrow is the gate, and straight the way, which leadeth to life."[2] The commandments of God, the precepts of the Church, the evangelical counsels seem difficult, and keep many a one back from following Christ, although the Lord Himself says, "My yoke is sweet and my burden light."[3] But how can a burden be sweet? It is made so by God alleviating the pain, as He promised by the Prophet. "And his burden shall be taken off their shoulder."[4] If the burning bush was not consumed because the Lord was in its midst, it is certainly not astonishing, that a burden is easy, if the Lord is beneath it and helps to carry it. O ye Simons of Cyrene, ye who only follow the Lord constrainedly, the very reasons with which you try to relax the strict Christian principles, to excuse yourselves, will be your accusers. The Master went the thorny way, and it is but reasonable to say that the scholars should follow after Him. Shall the servant wear a crown of roses, whilst the Lord bears one of thorns? It is unreasonable to

[1] Math., IX, 9.
[2] Math., VII, 14.
[3] Math., XI, 30.
[4] Isai., XIV, 25.

say that a thing so sublime and grand as virtue;—so glorious and eternal as Heaven shall be obtained without great labor and toil. What great burdens and difficulties do not earthly lovers willingly, yes, even joyfully undergo? To what a burdensome yoke of etiquette and human respect does the worldling not submit himself, in order to obtain the favors of mortals; thus paying homage during his short existence to the phantom of a false philosophy. But for Jesus, each step is too much, each service too laborious. Dear Christians, let us follow reason and joyfully bend our spirits to the sweet yoke of Christ: which, alone, can make man free; let us follow Jesus Christ over the rough and thorny way which leads to light; for, "He that followeth me, walketh not in darkness,"[1] says the Lord.

The Corn-Flower Blooms Not in the Open Fields, the meadows or in gardens, but hidden in cornfields, shunning, as it were, observation. Christ lived thirty years in retirement and appeared only three years in public; therefore, if we wish to imitate our Lord, we must love retirement and solitude. But you may object, and say, how can I do this with my large business, with my numerous family? In reply, I give you the answer which St. Thomas of Aquin gave to his sister, who asked him the question, "How can one be saved?" He answered, "Volendo," only will it.—Can you not according to the counsel of

[1] John, VIII, 12.

St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, reserve for yourself a quiet little chamber in your heart, where you may withdraw now and then from business, if only for a short space of time, to hide yourself from the world?

There are often visits, assemblies and amusements, which, if you can not entirely avoid, you can, at least, shorten or lessen. Can you not give up many useless and unnecessary conversations, which waste time and kill the spirit?—"Where there are many words spoken, there is little spirit," says St. Ignatius. "In silence and hope you will preserve your soul," says the Holy Ghost.—There was once a great servant of God in the Netherlands, Rudolph by name, who kept the most profound silence for sixteen years. One day a fire broke out in the town where he lived and spread rapidly. The despairing inhabitants ran to the man of God, who enjoyed the reputation of sanctity, conjuring him in the most moving terms, to break his silence for love of them, and command the fire to stop. The man of God was touched by their entreaties, went to the scene of conflagation and spoke only these two words: "Fire, stop." Immediately the flames ceased and the city was saved. The more retired you live, occupied only with God and your duty, avoiding by strict silence all sinful and useless words, the more strength will your admonitions have, O father, and the greater will be the blessing of your words, O mother, and the greater will be the efficacy of your prayer, O Christian; similar to that single word: "Let there

be," and heaven and earth were called into existence; similar to that other word, "I am He,"[1] and all the enemies of the Lord fell as dead to the ground.

THE CORN-FLOWER GROWS IN GRAIN-FIELDS; namely, in rye and wheat fields. From wheat is prepared that bread of grace, which through the Divine Word: "This is my Body,"[2] is changed into the Body of our Lord, and becomes the food of our souls. Do I need to exhort you, Dear Christians, to receive, in Holy Communion, Him, whom Mary bore and nourished at her bosom? By so doing you will be acting in accordance with the desire of Holy Church, and gain the indulgences, which she has attached to a zealous attendance at May Devotion. You can prepare no greater joy for Mary; and as there is no more intimate union with Jesus than in Holy Communion, so there is no more intimate communication with Mary than through Jesus, whom you receive. He is flesh of her flesh, blood of her blood, bone of her bone.

The Corn-flower springs up, although the husbandman sows but rye or wheat. Each year, a great number of these beautiful flowers rejoices his eye, and serves to decorate his house. This signifies, that, if you but follow Jesus by faithfully and conscientiously fulfilling the duties of your state and calling, the joys thereof will come of themselves; for the Lord will grant you consolation and peace.

[1] John, XVIII, 5. [2] Luke, XXII, 19.

"The hand of the Lord is a fruitful field; that which one gives, he receives again a hundredfold," says St. Ignatius. The world is a thornbush, on which only one rose blooms;—the consolation of faithfully fulfilled duties. All other joys vanish; but this joy and consolation continues to the end of life! Yes, it endures beyond the grave, for in Heaven, it is changed into eternal consolation.

THE CORN-FLOWER IS BLUE; blue is the color of Mary's mantle, and therefore, should remind us of the Mother of God. It is impossible to mention a time, in which Mary was not a faithful imitator of her Divine Son. Holy Writ says of her: "She kept all these words in her heart."[1] St. Anselm says: "As among all created beings Mary is the most glorious, so was she likewise the most perfect imitator and most faithful follower of Christ Jesus." Therefore, if we love Mary, we must imitate her example and follow Jesus Christ.

Blue signifies fidelity. Remember the promise you made on receiving the sacrament of Confirmation; to remain faithful to Jesus until death;—what else was it but a public profession of following Christ? The life of our Redeemer should be our model, therefore, in all our words, actions and undertakings, let us ask ourselves: How would Jesus have spoken and acted, or decided in this case? Christ should be heard from your tongue; Christ should

[1] Luke, II, 19.

be seen in your life; Christ in your heart, Christ on your lips, as St. Peter Damian says, so that it may be said of us, what was said of St. Thomas of Villanova. "A person could better read the Gospel from the Saint, than from a book." Blue is the color of Heaven and signifies the reward of the faithful imitation of Jesus. Since we all wish to go to Heaven and be blessed forever, let us beg the most Blessed Virgin Mary, the heavenly Corn-flower, that she may obtain for us the grace, not to weary in the imitation of Christ, until we can rest on the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and her immaculate heart forever.

To follow our Saviour, O let us endeavor
To keep His example before our eyes ever!
What though the path leads through labor and pain!
Light is the hardship compared with the gain!
Let us suffer what trials and sorrows we may,
God is all powerful, He will repay.
O Mary! we lift up our hands and implore!
Help us, oh help us! till life's journey is o'er!

TWELFTH DAY.

The Orange-Lily.

Let us to-day dedicate to the Mother of God a flower of the same name and form, as one we have already considered, but of a different color: A lily,

but on account of its fiery color, called Orange-Lily. Its name and color are symbolical. If you desire to be a lily, that is, pure and undefiled, you must be tried by fire. The trials of life are typified by the Orange-Lily. Never was a creature upon earth, more frequently and more severely tried than Mary. "She, whose interior afflictions, as the holy Fathers say, surpassed the pains of all the martyrs." As St. Cunigundes once passed over red-hot iron, in like manner, Mary went gloriously through the fire of rials, and now she blooms as the most beautiful lily on the throne of God in the Heavenly Paradise. My dear Christians, as the trials of life are different, so also, are the temptations various which cause those trials.

God Tries Us. You are amazed! I repeat it, God tries us, for in the Book of Deuteronomy, Chap. XIII, verse 3, we read: "For the Lord your God trieth you, that it may appear whether you love Him with all your heart, and with all your soul, or no." Was not the tree in Paradise a trial of God for our first parents to test their obedience? And did not our Divine Saviour try His sweet Mother at the marriage feast in Cana when He said: "Woman, what is that to me and to thee? my hour is not yet come."[1] Thus God tries man, in view of his salvation; for instance, He sends a sickness to one who is fickle-minded, that he may become more serious

[1] John, II, 4.

and repent; to the proud man, He sends humiliations, that he may be made sensible of his arrogance. Again, He takes possessions from the rich man, by fire, to wean him from attachment to earthly things; or He takes from the happy man a dear member of his family, that in prosperity he may not forget his eternal salvation, but think of death. But, alas! only the smaller number stand the proof of these trials sent by a merciful God, to test their virtue; whilst, over the remaining number of Christians, the Lord could shed tears, as He once did over the city of Jerusalem and say: "If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are for thy peace: but now they are hidden from thy eyes."[1]

The second tempter of man is that one whom Holy Writ calls a seducer and liar from the beginning; the crafty serpent, the poisonous dragon, the fallen angel, called Satan or the Devil. Consider, dear Christians, how our Divine Saviour fortified himself in public life by fasting and praying forty days, and at the end of this time, how the devil presented himself before our Lord, and tried to bring about His fall by temptations to sensuality and pride; think of this and you will not be astonished that St. Paul gives this admonition to the Ephesians: "Wherefore take unto you the armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day."[2] St. Peter says: "Be sober and watch, because your

[1] Luke, XIX, 42. [2] Eph., VI, 13.

adversary, the devil, goes about, as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."[1] God tries us for our salvation, but the devil always tempts us unto destruction; he provokes us to transgress the Divine precepts, and to neglect our duties. We are admonished to stand firm, and conscientiously apply the means, which the spiritual doctors recommend in such combats.

God beholds you in this temptation, and legions of angels are ready to assist you; you wrestle for the honor of God; and God will not forsake you, you may rest assured. This thought will inspire you with courage. God will never permit you to to be tempted above your strength. No temptation of the devil is so great, that it cannot be overcome; as temptation increases, grace also increases; and if God is with us, who shall be against us? Virtue is something exalted, therefore it must be bought at a high price.

Be always employed, and you will not hear the voice of the tempter. An active man is tempted by one devil only, whilst the idler is tempted by a thousand. Try to know yourself rightly! If a man wishes to strike fire from a flint, he looks carefully where the sharpest side is, because there he can get fire the soonest. Thus, also, the cunning enemy acts; he seeks to find the weak side of a man, and there he makes his attacks. Everything,

[1] Peter, V, 8.

therefore, depends upon your being able to keep yourself firm, and to defend yourself properly in that point. But the universal remedy against the temptations of the devil is prayer; because, through it, we unite ourselves with God, who is invincible. "Watch ye and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."[1]

THE WORLD ALSO TEMPTS MAN in accordance with its riches, pleasures and honors, and is, indeed, nothing else for us but a place of trial! because it is cursed by God, and in consequence bears for us thorns and thistles. These thorns and thistles are its temptations, attractions and snares into which it entices men to their destruction. Its most subtle poison is attachment to it. Alas! how many noble Christian souls perish through this love; charmed by its attractions; allured by its gold and silver, and intoxicated by its pleasures; such persons forget eternity, neglect their soul's salvation, and are lost!—Again, how many men does it send abroad to tempt their fellow-men to evil by bad maxims, by bad example, by seductions in different ways! If God were pleased to open our eyes, as he once did those of St. Anthony, we would behold the whole world full of hidden snares, and we would cry out with that Saint: "Who, O Lord, shall escape all these snares?" Therefore it is that so many souls are lost. "Out of ten ships sailing on the ocean," says St. Bernard,

[1] Mark, XIV, 38.

"scarcely one is lost, but out of ten souls floating upon the ocean of this life, scarcely one is saved!" Yes, this Saint is right when he says, that, if in this life, no hope of a future life remained, the world could hardly be distinguished from hell. Herein lies the most powerful means to resist the temptations of the world. Let us raise our eyes to Heaven; then the beauty of the world will not charm us; let us raise our heart to Heaven, then all creatures will not fetter us. "Oh! how the world disgusts me when I contemplate Heaven!" says St. Ignatius.

But There is Yet Another to Test Us, whose trials like those from the Lord are for the salvation of our souls. It is none other than that oft-tried and greatest sufferer, Mary! The Blessed Virgin knows how gloriously the sun of eternal light shines after the dark night of trials; how strong love becomes by passing through the fire of temptations; she, therefore, tests our love, our devotion and our confidence, by different proofs. Perhaps, you know a great sinner, upon whom nothing makes an impression, and for whom no one cares: If so, you know that Mary is the "Refuge of sinners;" now will you stand the test to pray for the erring one or not?—There is a forlorn sick person; nobody cares for him; in your heart you hear the voice: "Oh! what joy could I give the motherly heart of Mary." Will you stand the test or not? Again, it is a most beautiful and lovely day in May, and all nature seems to call you out in

the open air to partake of its beauty; but hearken! the bells for May-Devotions are heard in the midst of this loveliness and enticement. Will you respond to its call and rejoice the heart of Mary?—A very poor person asks for an alms; you yourselves have not much, and have already given a considerable amount; will you rejoice the heart of Mary by still giving something to the petitioning one?

The author of the Times of Pope Leo X, relates the following narrative: Charles Dolce was the youngest child of poor, but industrious parents, who lived in Sienna in Italy. His parents could not give him anything but a thorough Christian education; this implanted in his young heart an especial love toward Mary. Thus he grew up to manhood earning his frugal living by drawing. One day he came to Florence and passing through the streets of that great city, he met an old beggar, who asked him in the name of the Mother of God for an alms. Deeply moved, he reached in his pocket and found a single piece of money. He hesitated whether he should give it away or not, because it was his last coin: "He asked me in the name of Mary," he said to himself, "and I cannot refuse her anything, therefore I give it with joy, even if I should now starve." Then he entered a church near by and penetrated with a feeling of holy joy, because he had shown his love to Mary by such a trying sacrifice, he knelt down before the altar of the Mother of God, shedding tears of joy.

It happened that at the time the ceiling of the church was undergoing repairs by the principal painters of Italy. Their master Domenico Giotti was sitting high up on the scaffold, from which place he saw the young man, whose devotion pleased him: he descended and spoke to him, took him and taught him the art of painting. Charles succeeded so well that he became the first artist and greatest painter of his time; he was especially skilful in painting pictures of the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, whom he represented with a majesty, gracefulness, and heavenly grandeur that ravished the beholders, and even yet his pictures command the highest prices.

O Mary, obtain for us the grace to apply your tests and those of God for our sanctification! help us to resist courageously the temptations of the devil and the world, that we may become purified through these trials, and that we may be found like lilies, pure and stainless on the day of judgment.

The Orange-Lily warns us
  Of the tempter to beware,
As it is his wicked pleasure
  For our souls to lay a snare.

The Orange-Lily tells us
  From the world's false charms to flee,
For if we hearken to its voice,
  Our souls shall ruined be.

The Orange-Lily whispers
That Mary and her Son
Would fain by trials prove us
Ere yet our race is run.

O Lord, in all temptations,
Grant us thy saving grace!
That our souls come forth as lilies,
Then we shall see thy face!

THIRTEENTH DAY.

The Evergreen.

Proudly rolled the red waves of the Sea of Tiberias; majestically loomed up the mountains of Galilee, their green tops now lightly covered with snow, when Joachim and Anna brought their beloved child Mary to Jerusalem and offered her to God in the temple. There she spent the morning of her life; there she prayed for her parents,—for that father whose slightest wish she obeyed, and for the mother who had borne her. In the morning when the rays of the sun gilded the remote mountains of Arabia, and in the evening when the trumpets of the priests resounded from the pinnacle of the temple, her petitions went up for them. After a few years Mary lost her dear parents; weeping but peaceful,

she stood at their death-bed, for no reproach troubled her heart; indeed, in her heart dwelt a virtue, which she never violated in her whole life; namely, the virtue of filial love.

To-day let us reflect on this virtue in its emblem the Evergreen.

The Evergreen climbs up on walls and old buildings and clings fast to them. Thus should the heart of the child cling close to the heart of its parent in faithful love. When missionaries went to convert the savages of Western Oceanica, they found that the greater number had lost fingers and some even a hand. Astonished at this, they inquired the cause and learned that these were all sacrifices of filial love. When these poor heathens see a father or mother in danger of death, they cut off a finger without delay; if the sick parent does not recover after this first sacrifice, they mutilate themselves anew, and cut off at each new danger another member, so that they gradually cut off all the fingers, and finally even the hand. And these, dearly beloved, are savages; if filial love is so great in nations taught only by nature, how great and strong should it be in you, O Christians, who are taught by faith, to love your parents! Filial love is taught you by our holy religion. God himself commands you to honor your father and mother. Holy Scripture admonishes you of this duty in numerous passages. It is impossible to resist so many arguments, the more so, as even a glance at the animals incites to filial love; some of

them provide for their old ones with a love which often moves us to tears. And does not reason urge you with irresistible force to love your parents?— Count, if you can, the pains, tears and cares which you cost your mother in early life; count, if you can, all the troubles and fatigues of your father until he raised you thus far; his sleepless nights; his sorrowful days, his many privations endured for your sake. Consider also the example of Jesus Christ, how He loved His earthly parents, Mary and Joseph! Shall this not animate you to practice filial love?

The Evergreen bears blue blossoms. Blue is the color of the heavens, and Heaven is our eternal reward. Thus filial love is rewarded by an earthly and a heavenly blessing; for to no other commandment is promised any temporal blessing, except the fourth: "Honor thy father and thy mother that thou mayst long live upon the earth and that it may be well with thee." On the other hand, neither is the violation of any other commandment succeeded by so prompt a punishment. "The father's blessing establisheth the houses of the children," says Holy Scripture, "but the mother's curse rooteth up the foundation."[1] If you disobey your parents in an important matter; if you cause them great affliction in a point concerning your salvation, making them shed tears, you commit each time a mortal sin. But

[1] Eccl., III, 11.

this is not all. This sin draws down upon you, as no other one does, the curse of God, which is pronounced in more than thirty passages in Holy Writ. Cursed is the food which nourishes you; cursed is the beverage which you drink; cursed is the house wherein you dwell; cursed is the work which you do; cursed is the child which you beget; cursed are your children's children. St. Augustine says: "If there is anything like a second original sin, it is a sin against the fourth commandment; for it propagates its fearful consequences from generation to generation." Upon earth you shall never more find peace. Ill-fortune and misery will be your daily bread, even though you may live in comfort, for it will only serve you for greater perdition. The curse which falls upon you is not the curse of a man, the curse of your parents, the curse of a priest; but, it is the curse of the Omnipotent God. The same God who spoke, "and heaven and earth were created;" the same God, who said to the soldiers: "I am He," and they fell as if dead to the ground. This same God says: "Be cursed!"[1]—and are you in doubt, whether this curse will fall upon you? Let your own unfortunate heart answer. Oh! grief of a father! Oh, tears of a mother! they will burn hot and deep during a whole eternity; they will be glowing flames and fiery coals for you in hell! —Therefore I admonish you, with the Apostle:

[1] Deut., XXVII and XXVIII.

"Children obey your parents,"[1] for this love is followed by a two-fold reward: first, an earthly blessing, peace of heart. Surely there can be no more consoling thought in this vale of tears than one which makes life delightful, and death peaceful; namely, never to have grieved your parents considerably; and secondly, a heavenly blessing, eternal beatitude.

THE EVERGREEN RETAINS ITS COLOR, SUMMER AND WINTER, and thus should you love your parents in the summer of their lives, and in the winter of their death, honoring the living and the dead with equal love. A missionary writes of the savages on the Rocky Mountains, that when parents die, the children lacerate their bodies with sharp knives and shells. They would consider that they felt the loss very slightly if it cost them only tears; therefore it must be deplored with blood, also; and the deeper the cuts are the more powerful the testimony that their love is sincere. They say that deep grief can be assuaged only by deep wounds. Dear Christians, these are savages, infidels, heathens, and how great is their grief! What then should be our sorrow when our parents die, and how true our love for the departed? You, who have already buried your parents, did you not deplore their death with bitter tears, which St. Augustine calls the blood of the soul; did their loss not deeply afflict your

[1] Eph., VI, 1.

heart? Certainly, but now it is all gone, passed away! How! What can give me the courage to say so hard a word; to make such a bitter reproach? How has it been with you, who have stood by the death-bed of your dear parents? Did father or mother not tell you something before they departed this life, did not their dying eyes, although their lips were too feeble to utter it, tell you to lay something to heart; did they not, if you were absent from their death-bed send some last message to you? Did they not earnestly admonish you to be pious and good; to love God and avoid sin; and ever faithfully to walk in the path of virtue?—How many, alas! how many have forgotten it. If today many parents would rise from their graves, and behold the child, who instead of fulfilling their last wishes, lives in sin, how quickly would they return to their graves, regretting the love which they had for that child, and recalling the blessing which they gave it on their death-bed! Oh! that I could gather the dust, the ashes, the bleached bones of your parents and could place them before your eyes, and strew them in that path of fickleness and sin, on which you walk! Perhaps, this dreadful decoration would deter you from sin, and recall to your memory the last will of your parents and confirm anew your love towards them.

O most Blessed Virgin Mary! thou glorious example of filial love, cause the Evergreen flower to bloom in our hearts, so that we may always love

and obey our parents, bear their faults patiently, support them in their weakness and old age, pray for them when they die, and faithfully comply with their last wishes; let us honor them still, while their bodies are resting in the silent tomb, by leading a Christian and virtuous life; and doing this, we may hope to be reunited with them in that peaceful and blissful home beyond the grave, and with them be eternally happy.

Mary, childhood's model dear,
Teach young hearts true filial fear;
Teach them to obey like thee
That Christians true they e'er may be.
That God's word they may revere
And with reverence ever hear.
In their hearts may there be seen
True filial love, bright Evergreen.

FOURTEENTH DAY.

The Pink.

It is not easy to find a flower more easily cultivated than the Pink; it suffers itself to be transplanted in the cold earth, as well as in flower-pots; it fills our gardens and rooms with a delicious perfume; and for this reason we can take it as the

emblem of gratitude, a virtue which ought to bloom continually in every Christian heart. Our Lord praised the Samaritan whom He had healed of leprosy, when he returned to thank his Benefactor for the great favor bestowed upon him: "Go," said our Lord, "for thy faith hath made thee whole!"[1] "Nothing is so pleasing to God," says St. John Chrysostom, "as a grateful soul; nothing brings man closer to God than gratitude." This is, therefore, the strongest armor, the greatest wealth, the most inexhaustible treasure. But how many Christians are there, of whom the Lord could complain in the words of the Prophet: "What shall I do to thee, O Ephraim, what shall I do to thee, O Juda? Your mercy is as a morning cloud, and as the dew that goeth away in the morning!"[2] That we may not deserve this reproach, let us consider the virtue of Gratitude in the symbolic Pink.

THE PINK IS OFTEN OF A REDDISH COLOR, reminding us of the Precious Blood shed by our dearest Saviour on the Cross. We can have no stronger motive for gratitude, than Jesus bleeding and dying for us. Whosoever considers this oblation and feels no gratitude for it in his soul, should have his name blotted out from the baptismal record, for he no longer deserves the name of Christian. "To Jesus belongs your soul," says St. Hildebert, "for He gave His for it. To Him belongs your

[1] Luke, XVII, 19. [2] Osee, VI, 4.

body, for He immolated His body for it. Take heed now and see what He demands of your body and of your soul. Love Him with your whole heart, and you give Him what He requires of your soul; make yourself like His members and you render what He requires of your body. His eyes were dim in death, that your eyes might turn away from vanity. His ears were open to blasphemies and revilings, that your ears might be open to the supplications of the poor. His arms were extended, and His feet nailed to the Cross, that your arms and feet might be confirmed in the fear of the Lord. Behold, then, what will please God in you! behold the end for which He suffered for you!—Acknowledge the gratitude He demands of you!"

The Pink Exhales the Most Exquisite Odor. This represents the perfume of the gifts of God's grace to us, and to which our hearts should correspond by exhaling the sweet order of virtues, particularly that of gratitude. As often as you make the sign of the cross, you recall the three greatest graces of the Lord, for which your gratitude should not cease during life. In the name of the Father, who created me, in the name of the Son, who redeemed me, in the name of the Holy Ghost who sanctified me. But, dear Christians, did you ever in your life recite one Our Father in gratitude for your creation? And how few are your acts of thanksgiving for the graces of redemption and sanctification!—we all know what a fierce animal the lion is. A slave named Andro-

clus once drew a thorn out of the paw of one of these lords of the desert, and, when later, he was exposed to be torn by wild beasts in the circus, that lion was among them; and now see the gratitude of an animal; the lion laid himself down before Androclus, and neither harmed him, nor suffered him to be harmed by others. The consequences of it were that both man and beast were set at liberty, and were publicly led through the streets of Rome in triumph.

The Pink blooms in the open air, adorns the altar and decks the rooms; thus should the virtue of gratitude be seen in you wherever you may be; in the church, at home, or abroad. When St. Ignatius took a walk in the fields or woods, his soul was penetrated by so powerful a feeling of gratitude, that he invited the trees, flowers, and birds to unite with him in thanking the Almighty Creator. St. Francis in his sublime Song to the Sun, a masterpiece of religious enthusiasm and burning zeal, thanks God with joyful words, that He created the earth and everything in it so beautiful. In church especially, our prayer should be one of thanksgiving. Do you know why? "Because," as St. Ignatius says, "each prayer of thanksgiving is a new petition; it is written: Ask and you shall receive, knock and it shall be opened unto you." But in your family-circles, in your homes, you should, my dear Christians, especially thank God for all earthly benefits. O fathers and mothers of

families, say the prayers before and after meals, and have a watchful eye upon your children, domestics and subjects to see that they too perform this duty to God. That enlightened Christian, the blessed Bishop Wittman of Ratisbon, said: "The neglect of the common grace at meals in families, may very probably, be the cause of so many diseases now, which were formerly unknown, and it may also be the cause of so few temporal blessings in families."

THE PINK BLOOMS NOT ONLY SINGLE, BUT ALSO DOUBLE; thus signifying to us that we should not only be grateful to God, but also to Mary whom, after God, we have to thank for everything. For has she not borne Him, without whom we would all have perished; through whom alone, we are saved? If we now consider this with the eyes of faith, we must acknowledge the truth of the words of St. Bernard: "After God, we owe to Mary the sincerest, greatest and most ardent thanks." And which of us, my dear Christians, if we but glance into our own heart and question our own experience, will not be penetrated with the liveliest feelings of gratitude towards the one, who has already heard so may of our prayers; granted so many of our requests; rescued us from so many dangers, and obtained for us such an abundance of grace.

O most blessed Virgin Mary, heavenly Pink, in thy glorious hymn of thanksgiving, the "Magnificat," thou didst offer thy gratitude to God with these

words: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."[1] Let our hearts become like unto a grateful pink. Teach us that gratitude, which will be pleasing to our Crucified Saviour, and acceptable to God; that gratitude, which will lead us to Heaven, and unite us to thee and to thy Divine Son forever.

O Mary, heavenly Pink so fair,
Type of gratitude most rare,
Pray that within my heart may dwell
Thy image which I love so well.
Ask of God, for me, this grace
That gratitude may find a place
Within my stony, thankless heart,
That once with thee I may find part.

Fifteenth Day.

The Red Rose.

As the widow Noemi was returning from the land of Moab to her own country, she came to Bethlehem, where all who knew her said: "This is Noemi."—But she said: "Call me not Noemi, that is beautiful, but call me Mara, which signified bitter, for the Almighty hath quite filled me with bitterness."[2]

[1] Luke, I, 46, 47. [2] Ruth, I, 20.

In like manner, Mary speaks to us to-day, for in her we behold the Mother of Sorrows, the Queen of Martyrs: I am come into the depths of the sea and the storm has dashed over me, for great as the sea is my affliction. But, who caused this sorrow? St. Bernard directs us to the rose for an answer; its red color signifies the blood of Christ, the thorns our sins, and thus is the Red Rose the emblem of the Dolors of Mary.

In her twelfth year, Mary lost by death her beloved father Joachim; and her dear mother St. Anna soon after followed him to the grave. Then, she was, indeed, an orphan. An orphan! O hard and bitter word! Only he who is an orphan, he who has stood at the death-bed of his dear parents; he who has lost a father, a mother, can truly comprehend the desolation contained in this word, orphan, and the bitterness of such a condition.

But as night vanishes, and the stars grow dim at the approach of sun, so these comparatively small sorrows of Mary's early life, flee, like shadows, before the great sorrows of after years. Consider her grief at the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, on a cold winter night, when she had no other bed for him than a little straw in a poor stable; the flight into Egypt rendered trebly hard through fear of Herod, the roughness of the uncultivated country, and the duration and hardships of the journey. Consider her delay in a foreign country, far away from home, and all that are dear to her,

with a strange people. All this was nothing but a shadow, a thought, a dream, in comparison with her sufferings on Calvary, which are typified by the Red Rose. Let us draw three drops from this sea of sufferings, and contemplate them with a pious client of Mary, in the following manner: When Jesus, crowned with thorns and laden with a heavy Cross, painfully made His way down the street, which led to the gateway of the tribunal, a woman urged her way through the crowd. She was deathly pale; her eyes, which from abundant weeping, were now tearless, gazed with inexpressible sadness at the terrible wounds of the Redeemer. She heard neither the insults of the Pharisees, nor the threats of the executioners, but when lances aiming at her breast, pressed between her and her Divine Son Jesus, her countenance showed such an expression of deep sorrow, such entire disregard for death, that the conquered executioners slowly lowered their weapons to the ground before this most holy woman. Although cruel, they thought of their own mothers. Mary then directed her gaze full of anxiety to the Redeemer, whose mild countenance was now swollen, discolored, disfigured and covered with blood and mire. Scarcely anything of the image of the Creator could be seen. Most tenderly she touched His sacred forehead with her hand, to convince herself that it was really her Son. No sigh relieved her oppressed heart, for it seemed as though she must die. Jesus who observed her, raised His sacred

head, bent under the weight of the Cross, saying: "Mother!" At this word, which sounded like a death-knell in the ears of the most holy Virgin; a new sword of sorrow pierced her heart, and she could scarcely support herself; she staggered and grew pale. The women of Jerusalem whispered one to another: "The poor mother!" Whilst on Mount Calvary, Jesus being raised on the Cross, Mary hastened thither, passing the soldiers who were casting lots for the robe of her dear Son. Deeply grieved, she thought of the time when, complacent in the love of Jesus and free from cares, she, in the evenings by His side worked at this very festal garment. This thought was like a dagger wounding her very soul. For the gleam of by-gone happiness revealed the more strongly the darkness of her present misery. She raised her eyes to Heaven to obtain strength, and her gaze met that of her Crucified God. At this frightful spectacle, she stood transfixed by the most poignant anguish, in comparison to which, all that she had hitherto suffered, seemed only a troubled dream. Everything vanished before the Cross. The sun concealed himself, the heavens grew dark, the earth trembled, the rocks split asunder, the graves sent forth their dead. Amidst all these motions of agitated nature, Mary stood immovable, undisturbed by all these terrors, with her hands folded in prayer and in profound contemplation of her Crucified Love.

The women of Jerusalem again began to weep and say compassionately: "The poor Mother!"

When the body of the Lord was taken down from the Cross, Mary knelt on the ground, her fingers were stained with His most precious Blood. She spread the clean linen over her outstretched arms to receive again her Divine Son, who comes back to her once more, and comes back thus. The sacred body is, at length, lowered so far that St. John can receive the holy head in his arms, that it may not sink down helpless, and St. Mary Magdalene holds the sacred feet. One single moment Mary in speechless agony casts herself sorrowfully on her knees, and the next moment she receives the Sacred Body in her extended arms. What a meeting, what a return! The Babe of Bethlehem has come back to its mother's bosom. She rises from her knees, carrying her precious burden, as easily, as she carried him on her flight into Egypt. She sits down upon the grass with Jesus stretched out upon her lap. There was not one feature of his holy countenance, not one wound on His sacred body, which was not to her at the same time a sorrow and an object of the most profound consideration. In vain for her did the birds trill their evening songs, after the depression of the solar eclipse was taken from their joyful little hearts. In vain for her, ascended in the cool spring air, the sweet scent of the tender fig-leaves; and in vain the tender buds and shoots

gave forth their vernal charms. Her affliction was beyond all consolation of nature. Her flower was cruelly broken and lay crushed on her lap,[1] the Red Rose, whose thorns were our sins. "He was bruised for our sins,"[2] says the Prophet; and should not Mary, the Queen of Prophets, have known this? She did know it, and she felt the sufferings of her Divine Son all the more keenly because we were the cause of them. But how, dear Christians, can we console this afflicted Virgin? By true contrition for our sins and the firm resolution not to commit them in future. This grace we will obtain, if we meditate frequently and devoutly on the sorrows of Mary; for it was revealed to a pious soul, that the Lord would grant four special graces to this devotion. First, perfect contrition for all sins commited, some time before death: Second, an especial protection and assistance in the hour of death: Third, to have the mysteries of Christ's sacred Passion deeply imprinted upon the soul; Fourth, the special protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

O Rose, with thorns surrounded,
O Rose, of a blood-red hue,
You tell of a Man-God's Passion,
Of a Virgin's heart pierced through.

[1] Faber: "Foot of the Cross." Chap. VII.
[2] Isai., LIII, 5.

How deep that Mother's sorrow
No human tongue can tell!
But 'twas our sins that pierced her,
In the Son she loved so well.

Let us grieve for sins committed,
Which caused her so much pain,
That when our lives are closing,
She may grace for us obtain.

SIXTEENTH DAY.

The Larkspur.

Severus, a Roman Emperor, gave to his soldiers this signal of war: "Laboramus," that is, let us work, let us fight; and by it he illustrated that grand sentence of the holy sufferer Job: "The life of man upon earth is a warfare."[1]

If, my dear Christians, I give you an ensign to-day, it must be the Larkspur, for this flower is an emblem of combat. Hardly was the first sin committed, when the Almighty pronounced against man the sentence: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread."[2] The gates of Paradise were closed and this earth became for him a great battle-field.

[1] Job, VII, 1. [2] Gen., III, 19.

Heaven must be obtained by earnest fighting, as our Divine Saviour says: "Not every one that saith to me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven."[1] The kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and only the violent shall bear it away. Hence the warlike language of the Apostles: "Labor as a good soldier of Christ Jesus,"[2] says St. Paul. Likewise the same Apostle says: "You have not yet resisted unto blood,"[3] and "Take unto you the armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day." The lives of all the Saints are full of combat. How earnestly did St. Francis of Sales strive until he overcame anger! How perseveringly St. Ignatius fought until he conquered the impure spirit! How many prayers, fasts, and vigils did it require of a St. Francis to win Heaven for himself! How did St. Aloysius struggle in the bloom of youth to preserve his innocence! How did St. Alphonsus wrestle even in his ripe old age, at the very verge of the grave to remain in the friendship of God! And our own hearts, my dear Christians, must give testimony to this truth, by the constant struggle which is taking place within their secret chambers. Is it easy to keep oneself pure and unstained in the midst of the world, surrounded by a thousand temptations and dangerous occasions? No, here it costs contests,—contests with our own heart and contests with the hearts of others. Combats with our eyes and

[1] Math., VII, 21. [2] Tim., II, 3. [3] Heb., XII, 4.

ears; combats in youth and in old age; combats in the morning and in the evening; combats every day, every hour, every moment of our lives until the prayer: "Eternal rest give unto him, O Lord; and let perpetual light shine upon him," is recited over our dead body.

"A man's enemies shall be they of his own household,"[1] says Holy Writ; but as St. Ambrose says: "Our domestic foe is our corrupt nature." God's curse upon the earth: "Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee,"[2] has also extended to the earth of our soul; and therefore, this life is a constant eradicating of weeds, a perpetual pruning of thorns and thistles. Our corrupt nature is our enemy, because it is within ourselves. If an enemy attacks me from without, I can escape, I can flee; but from a morbid matter of disease within myself, I cannot escape. Our corrupt nature is an enemy, because it abides with us. If we have a personal enemy we may console ourselves, that perhaps he will make a journey or move far away from us, or that we may be freed from him by death; but this internal foe never leaves us, never travels far off, nor does it die before us. Our corrupt nature is a foe, because it never becomes reconciled to us. If we have a personal enemy we may make peace with him, but our own domestic enemy is implacable; ever assailing us, in youth, in maturer years, and in

[1] Math., X, 36. [2] Gen., III, 18.

old age; in health, in sickness, before and after conversion, in every place, in every state of life, in every age, and in every clime we find this tireless combatant.

Against this enemy there is no other expedient than combat, a life-long, continual strife, which will end only with our parting sigh. What weapons shall we make use of in fighting against this domestic foe, corrupt nature? My beloved, our armor shall be holy fear and zeal; of the former Holy Writ says: "No evils shall happen to him that feareth the Lord: but in temptation God will keep him, and deliver him from evils."[1] We must fear our own evil nature, because we are not sure for one moment, that it will not cause us to fall. Let not your conversion, your good conduct, your piety deceive you. Whosoever stands, let him beware lest he fall. Man as long as he lives is like a heap of burning coals covered with ashes; if a gust of wind comes and blows the ashes away the fire will be rekindled; he is like a convalescent, who is, indeed, cured of his malady, but always feels the consequences of it. Therefore, fight continually with the shield of holy fear, if you wish to gain the victory. This holy fear is not a disgrace, but a great virtue, for is it not praiseworthy to fear to offend the best of friends, our Lord and our God? That is true filial love, which fears to offend or grieve the most

[1] Eccl., XXXIII, 1,

tender of fathers. St. Paul admonishes us in these words: "Work out your salvation in fear and trembling."[1]

The second weapon is zeal. If you perceive that your corrupt nature draws you again to your former mode of life; that you grow lukewarm, fickle and slothful, then you must commence with new vigor, with new courage to animate yourself, or else you will be lost. Seize the weapon, zeal, and in your morning prayers daily address yourself, as that valiant captain addressed his soldiers: "Forward, forward! do you see that beautiful city? It shall be ours. Perhaps, this is our last battle; therefore, be not discouraged! Forward! Forward!"

During the day we should frequently renew our good intentions. Every year the swallows return, every spring the flowers reappear, and every day the sun rises anew, and we, also, should strengthen ourselves every day, and every hour in the day, by renewing our good resolutions. Therefore, pray dear Christians, pray or you will be lost. To-day, perhaps, you omit one Our Father, to-morrow two, the next day three, the following day half of your prayer is neglected, and next week the entire prayer is omitted, and very soon you will not pray at all. So here we see the evil which springs from neglecting any part of our daily prayers. A soul without prayer is also without love for God, without fear or

[1] Philip., II, 12.

grace, without the blessing of God. Let us take warning then in time, lest we fall into such a pitiable state, by the omission of prayer. Should you grow weary in the combat, O cast a glance upon our glorious Model, Jesus Christ on Mount Olivet, who did not cease praying although His soul was sorrowful even unto death! Look at Mary whose whole life was one of combat; consider the martyrs, how courageously they fought for the salvation of their souls!

In the year 1456, Mohamed, the Turkish Emperor, invaded Hungary; he advanced with one hundred and fifty thousand warriors to the city of Belgrade and besieged it. On the feast of St. Mary Magdalene the assault commenced, and continued twenty hours without intermission, until at last the Christians were so fatigued, that they relaxed in their efforts, and the Turks in crowds were entering the city shouting: "Victory!" But at this moment St. John Capistran, who accompanied the Christian army, seeing this, took a crucifix in his hands, showed it to the Christians, and cried out in a loud voice: "O my God, deliver Thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by Thy precious Blood; assist us, that the Turks may not say: 'Where is the God of the Christians?'" Upon hearing these words new courage animated the Christians, and they drove the Turks from the city, pursued them eight miles, and totally conquered them. Thus do you also, my dear Christians, take new courage in the word of God spoken to you by my lips, for the conquest which

will last during your whole life. Heaven, the aim of our daily contests, will repay us for all the sufferings endured. O most holy Virgin, grant us, we pray thee, for our ensign in combat, the flower, Larkspur, and permit not our hearts to relax in the valiant contest!

Man's life on earth's a warfare
From the cradle to the grave,
And he who longs for victory
Must battle like the brave.

Let Larkspur be our emblem
And God our battle cry!
We'll make no truce with evil,
But fight it till we die!

SEVENTEENTH DAY.

The Alpine Rose.

If you should ever visit Tyrol you would see the Bavarian Mountains, the Tyrolese and Salzburg Alps, a very high range, covered with perpetual snow and ice. On the sides of these mountains are rich meadows in which cattle graze. Their snow-capped peaks present a grand sight when tinged with the rays of the rising or setting sun.

My dear Christians, let me lead you to-day in thought, up these mountains, over moss-grown rocks and stones, across green fields and meadows, past herds of cattle, and the cottages of the herdsmen. Let us ascend higher and higher, so that the houses in the valley below almost vanish from our sight, for I wish to show you a flower which blooms only there in solitude, far away from men, so near to heaven. This flower is the Rose of the Alps. It is a marvelous and beautiful flower; its color is the richest red, and its lovely green leaves are as soft as velvet. It is never found on the plains or on low ground, but always on mountains, and the higher it grows, the sweeter is its odor; it blooms only for a season and is often found amid ice and snow. It is much esteemed on account of its rarity and beauty, and hunters consider it a good omen if they find one.

Heretofore we dedicated to the Mother of God flowers easily obtained and which bloom in our own gardens; but to-day we will exert ourselves, and search on the highest mountain-top for the Alpine Rose, that we may bring it down and offer it to the Queen of Heaven.

As a stranger passing over the Alps rejoices when he finds this flower, on account of its great beauty and fragrance, and then counts as nothing all his toil and searching, because he has the object sought for, so we, too, dear Christians, will rejoice, when we shall have obtained that virtue typified by the

Alpine Rose; namely, the virtue of contemplation; for enraptured with its charming beauty we will forget all trials and difficulties endured in its acquisition.

The Alpine Rose is the emblem of meditation, because it blossoms only on the highest mountain-tops and in solitude, quite near to heaven. The heart of the contemplative man, in like manner, must soar up to God. When he wishes to meditate he goes away from the tumult of men; we may find him in the solitude of his own room, at the foot of the crucifix, in the open air, or in the holy sanctuary of some church before the tabernacle of the living God. And as this sweet plant often blooms amid snow and ice, so neither misfortune nor trouble of any kind; neither children nor temporal business; neither sickness nor earthly cares should be a hindrance to meditation.

Then love, dear Christian, the Alpine Rose, love meditation, which is nothing else than a prolonged consideration of the salvation of our soul, a serious reflection on Divine truths. Meditation is so necessary that St. Aloysius says: "without it we will not advance far in virtue;" and Sts. Ignatius and Alphonsus even said that: "without meditation it is impossible to be saved." And now, my dear friends, I submit the question to yourselves. If men would always think of sin and its terrible consequences, and have continually in mind the value of their immortal souls, have death with its terrors

always in view, hell with its unquenchable flames, and often contemplate Heaven with its inexpressible joys, would there be so much murder, injustice and adultery, so much cursing and unchaste language spoken, so many sinful companions and frequenting dancing rooms? No, for the words of Eternal Truth are everlasting: "Remember thy last end; and thou shalt never sin."[1] Rightly spoken, therefore, are the words of those great Saints of the holy Church, that meditation is indispensably necessary for attaining salvation; and holy King David says in his psalms: "Unless thy law had been my meditation, I had then been perhaps perished in my abjection."[2]

Meditation is something beautiful. Consider Mary, who in this virtue, as in all others, is our model. Meditation was her constant nourishment; and the temple at Jerusalem, the crib at Bethlehem, the parental house and the dwelling at Nazareth and Hieropolis, the city in Egypt, and Ephesus whither she went with St. John and Mary Magdalene, were witnesses to her interior prayer. St. Ambrose says: "There was never a soul gifted so highly in this heavenly virtue, as the beautiful soul of Mary. Her mind and heart were united in contemplating Him whom she loved more than all the Seraphim together. Her whole life was a continual exercise of the purest love of God, and even while she slept her heart watched and prayed."

[1] Eccl., VII, 40. [2] Ps. CXVIII, 92.

How greatly a fountain increases the beauty of a garden; around it everything looks fresh and green, which before appeared desolate; now, all the plants and flowers flourish because they are watered by its cooling drops. St. Francis of Sales says: "What a fountain is to a garden, meditation is to the soul, for it beautifies your words and actions." I once beheld Mary Moerl, a Tyrolese virgin in contemplation, and I can never forget the impression it made upon me. She was dressed in pure white, her hair unbound, her hands folded, and her eyes were immovably fixed on heaven; she knelt on her bed, but so lightly that no impression whatever was made upon her cushions; she did not stir, and one had to go near, to hear her breathe; she was unconscious to all around. Peace, joy, and a holy calm seemed to pervade her whole being. A profound feeling of awe penetrated all who saw her, for the Divine Beauty was reflected in her soul. When near her one forgot all earthly cares, and would soar with her to the heights of Heaven, feeling no pain but that of his own sinfulness and strong attachment to earthly things, which prevented him from meditating as she did. The great Fenelon, Archbishop of Cambray, wrote to his royal pupil, the Duke of Burgoyne: "For the love of God let meditation nourish your heart as food nourishes your body. A few moments spent in contemplating God, refreshes man, soothes his passions and gives a charm to his words."

The Alpine Rose blooms on the summit of the highest mountains, and is, therefore, hard to obtain; but meditation, of which it is an emblem, is easily acquired. You look at me, as if you did not rightly understand me, therefore, I repeat it, meditation is easy. But many of you may object, and say, how is that possible; we are satisfied if we can but get through with our vocal prayers, as we have distractions enough in them; and as for meditation we have neither time nor ability for it. Both of these answers, my dear Christians, are only suggestions of the evil one, for just as the Philistines tore Samson's eyes out, so the devil tries to do with you; if he cannot take your faith, he tries, at least, to prevent your considering that which you believe. Have you less time than king Alfred the Great, who spent daily eight hours in meditation, or less than the holy servant Notburga, who was the most industrious and active in the whole village, and nevertheless, meditated continually on the Eternal Truths. And finally, have you not Sundays and holy-days, free hours in the evening or morning which you could sanctify by this holy exercise? Do like St. Elisabeth who went six miles every morning, to the monastery of Reinharsbrunn to assist at holy Mass; she prayed the whole way, yet only said one Our Father, because she meditated upon that which she prayed. You must not think that it is necessary to be alone to meditate; for can you not raise your mind and heart to God even while

at your work? Often recall to mind the thought of death, judgment, or the sacred Passion of Christ, the love of Mary, and of Heaven and its eternal joys. Yes, you will say, I might if I could, but I have no ability for it. That seems to me just like the old woman, who after a pious and well-spent life came to die. She joyfully awaited death; there was only one thing that disquieted her. It was that she did not know what to say when she would enter Heaven. So she asked her confessor: "What shall I say when I enter the Heavenly Court?" The priest deeply moved at her childlike simplicity, said: "Dear child, only say: Praised be Jesus Christ! And the whole Heavenly Choir will answer, forevermore!"

Believe me, my dear Christians, you need not be learned to make a good meditation. If you cannot even read or write you can meditate, since it only requires of you to think seriously on the subject of your meditation, and then listen attentively to what your heart says.

St. Francis of Assisi meditated his whole life on these words: "My God and my all!" St. Catherine of Genoa made use of a less number; namely, "Thou and I!" and St. Magdalene of Pazzi, of only the one word, "Love!" St. Teresa made use of two words; namely, "One soul!"—And what is nature but a large book for meditation? Behold the sun, the beautiful verdure and lovely flowers, the refreshing rain and the dews of early morn! O what a grand subject is this, by which the soul is

elevated to God, for who can behold anything beautiful without giving a thought to Him who made it so; now then is there, can there be anything more beautiful than this vast universe with all its loveliness, by means of which the soul can be elevated to God! No, no, for nature is the most sublime book of all earth's beauties, and vividly portrays the hand of its Creator. Have you ever heard of that hermit, who, although he could not read, yet meditated every morning and evening; and for this duty, made use of a book which contained only four leaves; one of these leaves was white and signified to him innocence, its value and its loss; one was red which represented to him the red-hot flames of hell; one was black which reminded him of death and all its terrors; the other was yellow which signified to him the golden crown of eternal glory.

Such, dear Christians, is the virtue of meditation, whose emblem is the Alpine Rose; this is the virtue which is so necessary, so beautiful and so easily practiced; cherish it, therefore, and to-day make a firm resolution to live more recollectedly so as to have continually in view your eternal salvation. Let this resolution, my dear Christians, be the beautiful Alpine Rose with which you cheerfully adorn our Lady's altar to-day.

Accept, O Mary, this Alpine Rose,
That grew amid the mountain snows;
Pray, offer it to thy Son Divine
And may His love my soul refine!

Eighteenth Day.

The Aster.

Yesterday we brought down a flower from the highest mountain-top, and to-day, dear Christians, we will search for one on the graves of the departed, symbolizing decay. The Aster or Star-flower is very pretty, having a large yellow disk encircled with many little bluish-red or lilac-colored leaves. It is an odorless autumnal flower which blooms till November and is much used on All Souls day for wreaths and decorations for the graves.

This scentless fall-flower, this sad color and this tribute to the departed, is the emblem of decay. And would, dear Christians, that these flowers adorned all your streets and path-ways in order to remind you of the vanity of all earthly things. Would that they might unceasingly cry out to you: "All must perish. We bloom in autumn, and for every one of you the autumn of life will come, the harvest-time when the fruit of your labors will be made manifest to the whole world in the valley of Josephat. We bloom on graves, and for you also the last hour is drawing nigh, death is approaching, and we will soon be used to decorate your grave, while your lifeless body beneath is returning to its original nothingness." Let these thoughts, my dearly beloved, sink deep into your hearts, for soon, very soon, for you all the joys of earth will have passed forever!

"In this life," says St. Augustine, "there are no true earthly joys, for there are only two kinds: sinful joys and those which are innocent and harmless; the first are false, the second are short-lived. Therefore, dearly beloved, the holy Church is right when she says in one of her grand prayers: "Let our hearts, even amidst the change of perishable things, hold fast to that alone in which true joys are found: namely, Heaven."—It happened once, that a woman living in the city of Antioch, cursed her children, and forthwith they began to shake and tremble and finally died. Now this was the curse of an earthly mother, and see its effect; but what shall be the effect of the Divine curse on the earth: "Cursed be the earth, thorns and thistles shall it bring forth,"[1] and you,—you wish to have nothing but roses, roses of joy from the cursed earth, which is your place of exile,—your place of probation! Was not your first entrance into this world echoed by a cry of pain and distress? was not this a clear proof that you had entered a vale of tears? Upon this earth joys have never been and never will be found. "He is the greatest of fools," says St. Peter of Alcantara, "who seeks pleasure in this world; he is a simpleton who would ask of a beggar to lend him a thousand dollars, and he is also a simpleton who would ask mercy of the devil." The joys of this world are like Sodom's apples, beautiful to look at,

[1] Gen., III, 17, 18.

but within are nothing but rottenness and worms. Earthly joys are dreams of unreality, false glares of riches, beauty, honor, which alas, will soon be followed by sorrow. I will say nothing about sinful pleasures; for you know well that they are not true. Behold illicit friendship, how both parties are fearful and ashamed in the presence of a priest, their parents or relations; how they are constantly restless; how many anxious hours they pass; how many deceptions are made use of in order to conceal their base designs. What anguish they feel during a sermon; how extremely difficult to them is confession, because they know that as long as they do not give up that unlawful friendship, it is all useless; and further it will only be another cause of their perdition. Are these bitter reproaches of conscience joys? No! cries out that fallen girl and weeps! No! cries out the man who has lost his innocence. No! cries out the corrupted person on his death-bed. No! No! No! cry out thousands and thousands in hell, who will burn forever on account of such pleasures! Therefore, fly, fly from such sinful joys! Seek those which are permitted, and which the merciful God deals out to us occasionally like little dew-drops that we may not totally pine away. They are not true joys, but nevertheless serve to gladden the heart amidst the weariness of its exile. Think of a father who tarries in prison fettered with a heavy iron chain; his life is without joy, not even a smile lights up his countenance;

melancholy and distress gnaw at his heart; but now, he receives a letter, a letter from his beloved son; it contains expresions of filial love, sympathy and compassion. O what a joyful moment for this afflicted father; he reads and re-reads it; he weeps bitterly, and as the tears course down his cheeks, he holds the letter close to his bosom and will not relinquish its hold; but hark, the chains rattle and all his joy is gone; he cries, "I am a captive, I cannot go to my child!" Days, weeks, and years of misery and sadness wear slowly away. At length, the door of his cell opens to admit his wife and children whom he had not seen for years; his joy, at beholding them once more, can be better imagined than expressed; see it in the tears that flow down his meager cheeks; understand it in the hours that pass away like so many minutes; will this happiness be lasting? alas, no! Do you not hear a noise which startles this happy group? The jailor cries out: "The time has elapsed!" and now these loving hearts must separate.

Behold in this picture human joys, their short duration, their continual change. Joy seldom gladdens the heart of man unattended by sorrow, which constantly cries out to him that he is an exile, that he is not free, that he must suffer. The world is truly a vale of tears which sin has made so thorny. When happiness seems to smile most benignly upon you, beware, for death will come at the most unlooked-for moment to take you away, or some one

you greatly love, and cries out: "The last farewell must be spoken, time is forever passed." Look at the Mother of God, the holiest of all creatures. Was she not worthy to be exempt from all afflictions on earth? Behold her joy at the birth of our Saviour, but how soon was this succeeded by sorrow and anxiety on account of the persecution of Herod; then followed the flight into Egypt and the sojourn in a strange land. She was greatly delighted with the youthful Jesus, but soon followed the painful loss and three-days' search. She rejoiced in the teachings and miracles of her Divine Son, but soon after followed His condemnation, cruel scourging and death. I will not mock at you, my dearly beloved, but I ask you in the earnestness of my soul: How many have been the truly happy, joyful hours of your life? Tell me: Did you not after each joy have to endure some sorrow? Therefore, prepare yourselves, in seasons of joy, for the unknown affliction of which it is the forerunner. Did you ever reap wheat from a field in which you had sown barley? No! Certainly you did not. Well, neither can you reap from a cursed earth a blessing which it does not possess. This vale of tears cannot give you a true, abiding joy, for its joys pass away; its love also passes, and this is the second cry of the Aster.

I do not speak here of that love which should be called diabolical hatred;—of sinful, impure love of passion, which can be destroyed by disgust, jealousy, weariness, faithlessness, or separation, and which is

therefore, no love at all, and over which St. Augustine and St. Margaret of Cortona, after their conversion, wept bitter tears, during the rest of their lives. About this love I will not speak; but only of that love which God has sanctified, the Church has blessed, and religion has allowed; namely, conjugal love, filial love, and holy friendship. These bonds also will break, this love pass away. The holiest of the holy experienced this, and how much more you. Mary had lived nine years in the temple when the first dark cloud saddened the serenity of her pure heart; it was the death of her beloved father Joachim. She, indeed, asked of God to spare his life, but it was not His Divine will, as He wished to detach her by degrees from all earthly ties, that she might have no other support but Himself. Thus, early in life, she entered into the school of sufferings; she wept, for her soul like that of her Divine Son, was not without feeling. She accepted the bitter chalice with resignation to the will of God. Soon after the death of her father followed that of her dear mother Anna. Fresh tears of sorrow coursed down her cheeks at this great affliction. Some twenty years after this event Mary stood at the death-bed of her spouse St. Joseph; he had been to her a protector during life, exhibiting on all occasions the most tender love for her, and now death calls him from her; calmly and peacefully, but with tearful eyes she follows him to the place of burial. A few years later we see her standing beneath the

Cross of her Divine Son, His precious blood flowing upon her head, and His last look penetrating her motherly heart. Now turn your eyes to Ephesus where Mary lost the faithful companion, the loving friend, Mary Magdalene, who like Ruth had left her native land and her people, and had followed her across the sea; and Mary wept for her as Jesus had wept over Lazarus!

Thus, my dear Christians, does the Lord take from us those whom we love, to impress deeply upon our minds the great truth that there is only one love which will never perish, the love of God. Therefore, O most blessed Virgin, detach our hearts from all transitory joys, and infuse into us that love, of which St. Augustine says: "Do you desire an eternal love, love Him who is eternal."

The Aster springing from the tomb,
Strange union of decay and bloom,
Serves to remind us of our doom.

Earthly joys are quickly past,
Youth and beauty fly so fast,
Heavenly joys alone will last.

NINETEENTH DAY.

The Myrtle.

You were admonished yesterday, dear Christians, to detach your hearts from carnal love and perishable things, and to dedicate them to God whose love endures forever. To-day we will celebrate this union of hearts, by reflecting on that flower which is the emblem of the bridal-tie; namely, the Myrtle; it is a fair and tender flowret with small green leaves somewhat like that of the box-weed. A bride, on her wedding day, adorns her hair and dress with these pretty little snow-white buds and blossoms. The heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary is like the Myrtle, for she is a spouse in a three-fold sense. She is the spouse of the Holy Ghost, who from all eternity preserved her, the purest vessel of His grace, from every stain of sin, and united her to Himself in Divine love saying: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love."[1] He overshadowed her at the Incarnation, for the angel said: "For that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost."[2] The Divine Spouse renewed this love with her on the feast of Pentecost, and now she reposes forever in His Divine love in Heaven. Therefore, St. Thomas calls her the vessel of election of the love of the Holy Spirit. St. Bernard says: "A soul is pleasing

[1] Jer., XXXI, 3. [2] Math., I, 20.

to the Father who loves the daughter; pleasing to the Son, if she loves the mother; pleasing to the Bridegroom if she loves the bride." So, if you love and honor Mary, you are pleasing to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

Mary was the spouse of St. Joseph. It was the will of God, that she should give her hand in marriage to an upright man, who could give testimony of the purity of her life; to a just man, who could protect her and her Divine Son in the hour of trial; to Joseph, a man already advanced in years, who had always lived a single life, earning his livelihood in the sweat of his brow. The humble carpenter of Nazareth become the spouse of Mary. She did not hesitate to espouse him because enlightened by Divine inspiration, as St. Ambrose says, she knew that this just man would be for her, a protector, a father, a guardian of her chastity. What more could she wish, God had heard her prayer and granted her the fulfilment of her vow of virginal purity.

If God chose the humble St. Joseph to be the Spouse of the Queen of Angels, the foster father of the Messiah, it was because he possessed treasures of grace and sanctity so great, that even the heavenly spirits might have envied him, it was because his virtues exalted him to be the first among his people, and because he stood higher in the Book of Life than the greatest princes. The Blessed Virgin was not espoused to the most powerful; but to the most worthy.

The espousals took place according to the custom of the Hebrews, in a worthy manner. Joseph gave to Mary, who was crowned with the bridal wreath of roses and myrtle, a coin and a ring in presence of witnesses and said: "Take this as a pledge," and added: "Thou shalt be to me as my mother, and I will honor thee as the Altar of Jehovah." From that time they were before God and the law, as brother and sister, although their union remained formally acknowledged. O holy Joseph! exclaims St. Bernardine of Sienna, "O how I envy thee! if thou wert but my soul and Mary the bride of my soul!" —But is not the wish of this Saint fulfilled, for Mary is the spouse of each soul that loves her. The Holy Spirit lets her say: "I love those who love me." And St. Bernard says: "Mount Calvary is the Church, St. John in whom is represented all mankind, is the bridegroom, Mary is the spouse, the time of the espousals is the last moments of the Redeemer." The priest who blesses the nuptials, is Jesus Christ, who says to the spouse: "Behold thy son!" Mary replies: "May it be done unto me according to Thy will," and the blood of the Lord seals and strengthens forever the bond of love, that no earthly power can ever dissolve. Since that time the love of the heart of Mary is more glowing than fire, more unconquerable than death, more unquenchable than hell, and more precious than all the riches of the world.

Mary desires to be loved by us, not for her own benefit, but for ours; she is and always will be Queen of eternal glory whether we love her or not; she wishes to be the spouse of our souls for our own sake, because our love for her assists us to reach eternal beatitude. Only through Mary do we come to Jesus, and if we do not love her we will never enter the Kingdom of her Divine Son.

The Holy Church, in the sixteenth century, instituted a special feast in memory of the Espousals of Mary and Joseph. This feast is celebrated every year on the 23rd of January. But, dearly beloved, when shall we celebrate our espousals with Mary? Can we find a more fitting time than during this beautiful month? Let us then to-day during May Devotions bind ourselves to her forever; let that which once took place in Jerusalem be renewed to-day in this church. Instead of blessed St. Joseph, let our soul stand entreatingly in the presence of her who hastens to meet us. Our priest is the Lord, and if He asks of us three times, as He once asked St. Peter: Do you love Mary? Oh, then let us answer and say: Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thy Mother, and if we ever after say three "Hail Marys" daily in remembrance of this three-fold avowal of our espousals with Mary, we will accomplish an exercise earnestly recommended by the holy Fathers. St. Alphonsus says: Whoever says this prayer conscientiously, will always be firm and victorious in temptations against holy purity. St.

Joseph gave to Mary a ring and a coin; in like manner the Mother of God, draws round us a circle of graces at our entrance into this world which will encompass us till death. Let us dedicate to her the gold ring of noble, faithful, persevering love; and for the coin, let us always carry a medal in her honor; one blessed by the Church, for it will constantly remind us of the bridal relation of our soul with Mary.

To him who happiness here seeks,
O Christian soul, the Myrtle speaks:
It tells of holy mystic vows
By which the spirit may espouse
The gentle Mary, purest dove,
And thus forever gain her love.
A medal with her image fair,
Let each upon his bosom wear;
Then will she here her love extend,
That we may reach a blissful end.

TWENTIETH DAY.

The Crown-Imperial.

The Crown-Imperial, a beautiful flower, is truly an ornament in our gardens. It has five gorgeous bells of golden hue dotted with white, as though set

with precious gems; this flower hangs from the top of a tall stalk, forming, as it were, an imperial crown.

If, according to our custom, we dedicate this flower to Mary, we cannot be long in doubt as to what it typifies; surely it can be nothing else but the glory of Mary.

Our Holy Father, the Pope and visible head of the Church wears a triple crown, and triple also, is the crown of Mary. Upon her brow sparkles the crown of glory surpassing that of all the saints; the crown of Protectress for all men, and the crown of dominion over all the powers of hell!

The Crown-Imperial, which is the symbol of the glory of Mary, bears five golden bells. As the crown of King Alphonsus of Castile was decorated with five precious stones of immense value, so also the crown of Mary is composed of five glories, which proclaim that there is none higher, none more excellent, none more perfect, than Mary, except the Divine Majesty Himself!

The first glory is her Immaculate Conception, for God said to her as Assuerus said to Esther: "This law is not for thee, but for all others."[1]

The second glory is, that she bore her God, for in her the Word was made Flesh, the Word of whom St. John says: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God!"[2]

[1] Esth., XV, 13. [2] John, I, 1.

The third glory is, that notwithstanding her maternity she still remains a virgin as Isaias had predicted a thousand years before: "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son!"[1]

The fourth glory is, that God was obedient to her, and did as she desired, for mark the words of Holy Scripture: "He went down with them to Nazareth, and was subject to them!"[2]

The fifth glory is, that she is the mother of all mankind, a Mediatrix between God and man, and mighty through the power of her intercession, as is God through the nature of His essence. St. Athanasius, full of enthusiasm, calls her the supplicatory Omnipotence.

Consider then these wondrous pearls, these precious gems of grace; form of them a crown, and tell me whether St. Peter Damian is not right when he says: "As the naked eye cannot look at the sun in its midday splendor without becoming blind, so no human intelligence can comprehend;—no human tongue express;—no human heart sufficiently feel the inexpressible, immeasurable greatness of the glory of Mary. Mary that virgin who could say: 'He that made me rested in my tabernacle!'"[3] That virgin who being the Mother of God, is necessarily an abyss of graces, an ocean of splendors, a world of Divine riches, who is in fine after God everything that man

[1] Isai., VII, 14.
[2] Luke, II, 51.
[3] Eccl., XXIV, 12.

or angel can conceive of grandeur, magnificence, holiness and the most sublime perfections.

The title alone of "Mother of God," justifies, and sanctifies all sentiments of love and gratitude, all elevations of the soul, and suggestions of tenderness towards her. The altars and temples built and dedicated to her honor; the hymns and prayers composed in honor of Mary; all that man can do for her is as nothing in comparison to her dignity as mother of God; because as St. Alphonsus says: "Man can never do too much for love of Mary."

"There are two miracles of Divine Omnipotence which could be neither better nor greater," says the Prince of Theologians, St. Thomas. These miracles which are so great, so incomprehensible, so divinely inexpressible are the Incarnation of Jesus Christ and the Maternity of Mary; and these were accomplished in and through the most holy Virgin Mary. And do you know the solemn moment in which this miracle of infinite mercy was accomplished? Do you know whose word was the means of its Divine accomplishment? Do you know what mouth has spoken that word? Reflect a moment, think of that day, the most beautiful on which the sun ever shone, when the Archangel came down from Heaven to announce to the Virgin of Israel, that she was chosen to be the Mother of God.

Submissive to the Divine will, Mary opens her mouth and, whilst God and His angels contemplated her with love, she speaks a few words through

which and with which, she gives to the world grace and glory: namely, "Be it done to me according to thy word!"[1] In this greatest of moments the Word was made Flesh, and a Virgin became the Mother of God!

So, dear Christians, these are the two great masterpieces, which according to St. Thomas, God Himself could not have made either greater or better. They were accomplished in Mary through words from her lips. Thus her glory became greater than that of all created beings and the angels placed upon her brow the imperial crown of honor and glory. St. Bonaventure rightly exclaims: "Let human wisdom no longer speak of the nothingness of its greatness; let it no longer profane the language of praise and admiration by extolling the achievements of human pride; let it cease to desire the veneration of earthly grandeur; enlightened by grace, let it finally acknowledge that all created greatness is but dust in comparison with the glory of our dearest Lady, the the Blessed Virgin Mary!"

Thus, dear Christians, was Mary exalted by God Himself. Let us now consider another glory which mankind bestows upon her, and which Mary herself, the Queen of Prophets, had foretold in these words: "Behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed!"[2]

Who is she, whom kings and people, the great and the small, the rich and the poor, yes, even the

[1] Luke, I, 38. [2] Luke, I, 48.

little children invoke as the Queen of the world, and salute as the Mother of God?

Who is she, whom the soldier invokes, amid the din of battle; the mariner on the tempestuous ocean; the husbandman as he cultivates his land; the invalid upon his couch of pain, and the dying Christian in his last agony?

Who is she, whom the Apostles of Jesus Christ honored, the first Christians invoked, the holy councils praised, and whom all men in every age have revered? Who is she that is honored and invoked by the Egyptian on the banks of the Nile, by the Negro in the wilds of Africa, by the Savage on the western plains, by the Chinese upon the ruins of his pagoda, by the Tartar in his desert, and by the people of Kamtschatka?

Dear Christians, it is Mary, she who is the joy of all Catholic hearts, the solace of all Christian souls; yes, it is Mary, whose honor is very great, whose renown is inexpressible, whose glory is immense. Mary, whose veneration went forth from the mountains of Judea, growing like a river broader and deeper, until it became a mighty stream, and to-day it is great as the ocean which surrounds the habitable land. Amazed at the unspeakable grandeur of Mary, you may perhaps ask: What can we do to increase the homage already offered to the Queen of Heaven? Well, I will tell you! You can extend the kingdom of Mary by a life in which her life is mirrored by virtues which are the reflex of her own. Imitate

her faith, her humility, her purity, her obedience and resignation to the Divine Will. Thus you will represent, in a spiritual sense, the five golden bells of the Crown-Imperial.

Endeavor, dear Christians, to fill the whole world with the praises of the exalted Queen of Heaven; destroy in yourselves the kingdom of sin, in order to gain the love of Mary; place your hearts, your lives, your salvation under her powerful protection. Consider that day as lost, in which you do nothing for love of her. Spread devotion to her, among your associates. Make your homes and churches resound with hymns in her honor, and thus add a link to the endless chain of homage and praise, which she beheld in spirit when she exclaimed: "Henceforth all generations shall call me blessed!"[1]

The Imperial Crown with its wondrous bells
Such a beautiful story of Mary tells!
Her Conception Immaculate first it sings,
Then her honor as Virgin and Mother rings.

It tells how her Son, her each wish did obey,
How she stands between man and his God to-day.
Her diadem glitters with marvelous sheen
In the home of the blessed, of which she is Queen.

O Mary, my Mother! Most lovely, most mild!
Look down now upon me, poor, weak, lowly child,
From this land of exile, I call upon thee,
My Queen, and my Mother: my trust is in thee!

[1] Luke I, 48.

Twenty-first Day.

Moss.

To-day, dear Christians, instead of dedicating to Mary one of the beautiful flowers which surround her image, we have selected another of earth's beauties as our votive offering, while we lovingly contemplate its beauty. It is the fresh, green Moss which is often used in decorating altars. It is the emblem of the love we should have for our neighbor.

We need only consider that sentence of the Apostle: Whosoever loves God, loves his brother, also, to be convinced of Mary's love for her neighbor, for in her heart the flame of Divine love burned most ardently. Why did she hasten over the mountains of Judea? It was to impart to her cousin St. Elizabeth the joy which filled her heart, that she too, might rejoice. Behold her charity at the marriage-feast of Cana, as soon as she observed the lack of wine she endeavored to relieve the embarrassment of the bride and bridegroom by supplying the want. And again, what a faithful friend she was to St. John and to St. Magdalene! How much has she assisted, by her counsel, the infant Church of God. She was its support at the sacrifice of her rest. Let us imitate her sublime example, remembering these words which apply to us also: "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another.[1]

[1] John, XIII, 35.

The Moss generally grows on the roots of trees, and as it were, warms and protects them; thus it symbolizes admirably, love for our neighbor. This virtue includes the spiritual and corporal works of mercy; it supports the neighbor by counsel and act, because such is the will of God. It loves all men without exception, because all are brothers, and all are redeemed by the precious Blood of Jesus Christ. It loves even enemies according to the example of our Divine Saviour, who prayed upon the Cross for those who were the cause of his sufferings and death.

Moss may be found at the foot of high oaks. The love of our neighbor must be joined to faith, or rather without faith there is no true love for our neighbor. The great Fenelon says when speaking about the creation of man: "Man formed of the slime of the earth lay motionless until God breathed into his face the breath of life, then he became a living soul." Just so is the natural love in us, until faith touches it with its Divine breath. Thus breathed upon, love becomes quickened, genuine and meritorious. Without faith, says the Imitation of Christ, love becomes sensual, because natural inclinations, self-love, hope of reward, and desire for convenience very often have part in it. Only by faith does love become a loadstone, which attracts the hearts of all; only by faith does love become a sun, which sheds its light upon all without exception; only by faith does love become like gold without alloy.

Moss remains green even during winter, signifying to us that we must always love our neighbor. This love should manifest itself especially in the hour of misfortune and want. Misery is the touchstone of love; if it perseveres at this time, it is true and genuine. That great Father of the Church, St. Basil, had a friend who had been imprisoned. St. Chrysostom informs us, that the Saint obtained admission into the prison whenever it was possible, that he might assist his suffering friend, even though by acting in this manner, he exposed himself to the same danger. When some of his friends earnestly remonstrated with him for thus risking his life, St. Basil answered: "In no other way did I learn to love." If we wish to be true Christians, we must have the true mark of Christianity; namely, love for our neighbor; that love which is best known in adversity. It is not hard to be attached to a rich, happy or respected person; but to be a friend to the poor and needy, to the sick and afflicted, to the outcast and abandoned, this is, indeed, a virtue which makes us like unto Jesus and Mary, and has true value in the sight of God. Neither should the winter of ingratitude chill our love towards our neighbor. Even though our charity be unappreciated, our gifts abused, our benefits received without thanks; our good intentions misconstrued and repulsed; it makes no difference, we did it for the love of God who taught us, that without love for our neighbor, we cannot be saved.

There is a beautiful legend about the Moss, which says, that its original color was grey; and when the dead Body of Jesus had been taken from the Cross and placed on Mary's lap, the last drops of His precious Blood trickled from His sacred Wounds on the moss beneath the feet of the Sorrowful Mother, and it at once became green, as a symbol of the all-quickening power of the Precious Blood of Christ.—Since our Lord died for us upon the Cross, love for our neighbor is green, that is, it gives hope of eternal recompense. Our Divine Saviour said: "As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren you did it unto me."[1] For I was naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you visited me; I was hungry and you gave me to eat. Truly your reward will be great in Heaven. O how joyfully should we practice charity toward our neighbor, which St. Francis calls the key to Paradise. It is related in the life of St. Catherine of Sienna, that a noble lady once met two beggars. As she had no money just then, she took from her person her silver girdle and gave it to them. The mendicants said to her: "Thanks, dear lady, on the day of judgment we will not fail to draw you from the left hand to the right with this girdle." This is a prophetical saying, which is fulfilled in recompense of each act of Christian Charity. God leaves nothing unrewarded. He remunerates in Heaven a drink of cold water

[1] Math., XXV, 40.

offered in charity. "Love of our neighbor," says St. Augustine, "is the seal of predilection." And St. Vincent of Paul says: "I cannot remember that anyone died a bad death who practiced works of charity towards his neighbor." Can there be any stronger motive to love this virtue than a good death and beatitude in Heaven?

O blessed Lady, who in this virtue art our most glorious example, give us great hearts which will inclose all mankind with equal love! A love that will weep with the afflicted, that will solace the downcast and support the poor! so that on the day of Judgment thy Divine Son may recognize us as His true children, and address us in these words: "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy." [1]

Let us always love our neighbor,
For him suffer, pray and labor,
God will pay all back in Heaven,
Yes! even a cup of water given.

Let us like God's holy Mother,
Reach our hand to aid our brother,
And like the moss e'er seek to cover
The faults in him we may discover.

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[1] Math., V, 7.

TWENTY-SECOND DAY.

The Marigold.

When the physicians of Emperor Rudolph of Hapsburg informed him that his death was near, he cried out; "Well then, let us set out for Spire;" this being the usual burial-place of the German Emperors. So accompanied by two priests the dying old man cheerfully rode to his sepulchre; as he passed along, the people from the surrounding country hastened to see him once more, for they loved him dearly. He died while on the journey at Germersheim on the 15th of July, 1291. We, also, dear Christians, are hastening to meet death every hour, every moment; for "what else is our life," says St. Augustine, "but a journey to death; it is indeed a continual one." O that we could all meet death as cheerfully and as well prepared as this Emperor! Let us now consider death in its emblem the Marigold. This is a simple yellow flower, with a hollow stalk containing milk; the plant grows nearly like a weed and can be found especially on the graves of the departed; and for this very reason is taken as the emblem of death.

The Marigold reminds us of the death of Mary. When after a beautiful day in spring the sun has set, his rays no longer warm and illuminate the earth, then everything in nature assumes a peaceful calmness, and the heart of man is seized with a melancholy

feeling at the solemn stillness reigning around. But what is the setting of the earthly sun in comparison to the departure of Mary, whom St. Ephrem calls the sun of life! After her return from Greece, Mary retired in Jerusalem to Mt. Sion, near the ruins of the palace of the kings of her own tribe, to the house which had been sanctified by the descent of the Holy Ghost. Here she awaited her last hours. The Apostles, disciples, holy women, and the whole congregation of the faithful crowded around her death-bed. St. James, that serious and penitential man, tried but in vain to repress his tears; St. Peter, who loved the Son of God so ardently during his life, wept aloud so great was his grief; St. John hid his face in his cloak and sobbed like a child. In the whole assembly there was not an eye, that was not moistened with tears; not a heart that was not well-nigh broken. And now for the last time Mary cast her loving glance on that dear group, who were all one in the love of Christ, and who would soon seal that love with their blood. Mary blessed them saying, that she would enter into the heavenly Jerusalem, in order to be able to do more for them; for although she was leaving them now; she would not forget them in Heaven. If St. Stephen saw Heaven open before his death, and St. John was permitted to look into Paradise, do you not think that the heavens opened to Mary the Queen of all Saints, that she might see the throne of her Divine Son? Yes, for St. Jerome says, "Jesus Christ,

Himself came to accompany her; and amid the songs of the Angels she was ushered into her Heavenly Home." O how beautiful was her death!

The Marigold, also reminds us of the death of our friends. However numerous the circle of our dear ones may be, it becomes smaller each year, for death unsparingly takes some one from its ranks. The grief that Mary felt at the death of her beloved parents, and that of her Divine Son, we too will sooner or later experience, and many of us have already gone through this trying ordeal. A glance at the graveyard recalls to our minds the ties which death has torn asunder; the bonds of conjugal and filial love, and also that of holy friendship.

The Landgrave Lewis of Thuringia, died of fever, at Otranto, during a crusade, on the 11th of September, 1227. When this sad intelligence reached St. Elizabeth, his pious wife at Wartburg, she sank upon her knees weeping and lamenting; she said: "Now is the whole world dead for me: for everything worthy of love has departed. Oh! woe is me, a poor disconsolate widow! Comfort me, thou, who art the consoler of widows and orphans!" This sorrow many of you have also experienced. When, for instance, a dying father or mother held your hand for the last time; or when a father placed his dear child in the coffin, or when a much-esteemed and loving friend was lowered into the grave; did it not seem to you, that you yourself would die? And tell me, does that moment not remain always fresh in

your memory? Our Divine Saviour shed tears at the grave of Lazarus His friend. Mary wept bitterly at the death of her dear parents and at the crucifixion and death of her Divine Son; these tears confirm the truth that "the death of our dear ones is most painful!"

The Marigold further reminds us of our own death. And this is very bitter; bitter by reason of the separation from our loved ones, the pains of sickness, the anxiety of conscience, the multitude of our sins, the omniscience of the Judge, the severity of the judgment, and the uncertainty of our future fate;—all of which assail the dying person and cause an icy sweat to moisten his forehead. Even the saints trembled at this last moment. O dreadful sentence: "You must die! you must leave your money and possessions, your house and your lands, your wife and children, and all that is near and dear to you!" As your last hour approaches your wife and weeping children gather round your death-bed; your parents weep in sorrow near your bed; perhaps a friend of your youth also weeps by your side, as he presses your cold hand in his. But death is coming, and that hand grows stiff and falls upon your breast; while from the feet upwards slowly moves that stroke, which takes the life from the heart. O truly our death is very, very bitter!

It is only thou, O purest of Virgins, holy Mary, that canst sweeten its bitterness; only thou who canst illuminate this night by assisting us in this

last moment by thy motherly care; and by obtaining for us from thy Divine Son, the grace of a happy death. Thou didst assist St. Joseph in his last hour, and thou didst not leave the Cross, the death-bed of Jesus thy most beloved Son! O then, remain with us also, in our last moments, and pray for us poor sinners in the hour of our death. Amen.

Wither not, O Marigold,
But thy petals e'er unfold;
Thou that symbolizeth death,
Increase our faith with every breath.
Warn us of that dreadful day
When from earth we'll pass away;
That each day we may prepare,
And of cursed sin beware.

TWENTY-THIRD DAY.

The Yellow Rose.

There is a legend which relates the following incident of Godfrey the Rough, Count of Barcelona. After he had fought by the side of Lewis the Pious, with great courage and success, against the Saracens, he carried his gilded shield to the king, that he might receive permission to have an escutcheon placed thereon. As the king beheld him covered with wounds, from which the blood still gushed forth,

he dipped his five fingers in the blood of the gallant warrior, and without saying a word, ran them over the shield, and thus marked five red lines upon it, which henceforth became the escutcheon of the Counts of Barcelona.

Let your escutcheon, dear Christians, be the Yellow Rose, sprinkled with the blood by which our souls and the souls of all men have been redeemed. It is the emblem of zeal for souls. Its color signifies the fire which should consume us for the salvation of our own soul. Mary, the mystical Rose, urges us to strive earnestly for our sanctification: "Come, my son, take counsel from me and save your soul!" O how beautiful is the soul! St. Bernardine says, that if man could see with his corporal eyes his glorified soul, he would scarcely believe that God Himself could be more beautiful. St. Thomas of Villanova says: "If the Almighty would create as many heavens of glory as there are drops in the ocean and grains of sand on its shores, all the beauties of those heavens joined together, would be nothing in comparison to the beauty of a single soul. Such a soul have you, O man! A soul created according to the image of God, and destined for eternal beatitude! That it might be forever happy, our Divine Saviour worked and endured so much, and shed even the last drop of His precious Blood. You have but one soul and it is immortal. Should you not then burn and glow with zeal for its sanctification, that it may not be lost for all eternity?

The Yellow Rose is a rare flower, as is also that virtue of which it is the emblem—Zeal for souls. A man laments if he lose a piece of money, complains if he is persecuted, weeps if death takes one of his loved ones, shed tears for everything but the soul of him who dies in mortal sin. Yet, how often these words resound in our ears: "What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"[1] How solicitous men are to preserve the body from sickness! "How much care," says St. Augustine, "does man take that he may not die so quickly; but how little that he might not die eternally." You love your dress and like to have it orderly; you love your property and wish to have it in good condition; you love your child, and wish it to be pious; you love your soul, and yet you do not wish that it should be happy in this world and in the next; for, instead of prayer, frequent reception of the holy Sacraments, avoiding sin and the occasions of it, you act, perhaps, in a manner the very opposite, and thus verify the sentence: "If people would only do half as much for the salvation of their souls as they do for their perdition, all would be saved." If we are careless about our own salvation, we are generally so about that of our neighbor. In this regard many Christians remind us of the Prophet Jonas, who had to publish the destruction of the city of Ninive. On his way he sat down under an ivy and slept. A worm struck

[1] Math., XVI, 26.

the ivy and it withered. The broiling sun beat upon the head of Jonas. He awoke, recognized the cause, and complained bitterly that the worm had destroyed his shade. That grieved him very much, but he felt no sorrow that so many thousands in Ninive should perish.

The Yellow Rose exhales an agreeable odor, signifying by this, that we are not here on earth merely for ourselves, but for others also. The words of Christ to St. Peter: If you love me "Feed my lambs,"[1] are in some regard, as St. Chrysostom says, addressed to all of us. We should always have a care for the salvation of our fellow men, exhale the sweet odor of good example, pray for them, admonish them, and persuade them to avoid evil and do good. We can never give to Mary a greater pleasure, nor imitate her better, than when we work as it were into her hands, and glow with burning zeal for the salvation of souls. "She, who is the Refuge of sinners," says St. Alphonsus, "loves those most, who try with her, to seek and to save the lost lambs." This glorious task is the one object which the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart of Mary has taken upon itself. Therofore, every true Christian, every true servant of Mary should belong to this Confraternity. What joy to be able to assist Mary! What a consolation to have saved a soul! "Mary will surely convert you yet," said a young girl of a

[1] John, XXI, 15.

noble family in Germany, to a young man, a near relative of hers, who was leading a dissolute life. "Then she has to perform a miracle," sneeringly replied the youth; and from that time they did not see each other any more. The girl had even from her childhood cherished a tender devotion to the Mother of God, and an unshaken confidence in her powerful intercession. She now prayed and fasted for the salvation of this erring soul; for this purpose she offered to God her holy Communions, and knelt for hours in prayer before an image of Mary; not a day passed in which she did not recommend him to the Sacred Heart of Mary. During this time the young man still continued his licentious life, in a mercantile house, in the great city of Strasburg; without the least change for the better. Finally his father died, and the girl hoped this would turn him from his evil course, but in this she was disappointed. This loss did not seem to make the least impression upon him. The confidence of the young girl was still unshaken; she redoubled her prayers. The young man was once on a journey and the horses ran off and he himself was thrown from the conveyance and severely injured; it was long before he recovered; and still he remained unconverted. Shortly after this he came accidently into a city where a mission was being given. In the evening he went along with his friends to hear the sermon, but only through mockery and with a bad intention. The missionary who spoke of the power and love of Mary, said that

there was no sinner so great, but this Mother would have pity on him. The young man was deeply moved on hearing this and began to sob, and hastened from the church that he might give vent to his tears; he was truly converted. Some days later, the young girl who had prayed so much for him, received a letter containing the following words: "Do you remember what you once told me, that 'Mary will surely convert you yet?' and how I contemptuously answered: 'She will have to perform a miracle then;' now rejoice with me for that miracle has really been performed. Mary has converted me; I am saved!"

O most blessed Virgin Mary, pray for us that in our hearts may bloom the Yellow Rose of zeal for our own souls, and for those of our fellow-men, so that in us may be fulfilled these holy words: "Whosoever saves the soul of his brother, saves also his own."

One soul alone does each one own,
A soul of priceless worth;
Then let us aim to save the same,
It was not made for earth.

The Yellow Rose whose beauty glows
In gardens rich and rare,
Tells of the zeal we all should feel
To keep this treasure fair.

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.

The Narcissus.

Next to the adoration we owe to God, the Supreme Being and Lord of all things, we owe to Mary the most tender love, the greatest devotion, the strongest attachment and the most devoted service. This veneration of Mary, according to a doctrine of God's holy Church neither contradicts Holy Writ, tradition, nor reason. It began at the tomb of Mary, which was devoutly visited by the first Christians. This devotion has continued from generation to generation down to the present time, and will continue till the end of the world. As Mary herself predicted, in these words: "Behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed!"[1] St. Francis of Sales calls this veneration of Mary: "The spring-time of holy Church, which always sends forth new blossoms, keeps all hearts alive and active in their love towards God, and through its sweet perfume inspires all Christians with the most exalted virtue." The emblem of this devotion to Mary is the Narcissus, a spring flower, whose form itself points to her, who should be the object of our love and veneration. Its upright stalk tending towards heaven, speaks to us of the Queen of Heaven; its calix somewhat inclined towards the earth, reminds us of the Mother of God

[1] Luke, I, 48.

looking down from Heaven full of love and pity upon her devoted children; its snow-white petals signify the purity of the immaculate Heart of Mary; the yellow and red circle in the center symbolizes the golden crown of glory with which the most Holy Trinity has crowned Mary in Heaven, and the whole Catholic Church has crowned her upon earth; its sweet scent indicates the love and tender charity of her whom men salute as the Refuge of Sinners, and the Consolation of the Afflicted; its blooming in spring-time proclaims that where devotion to Mary is found, a spring of ardent love for God is awakened, and the flowers of all virtues bloom.

The Narcissus raises itself high above the ground, ever tending heavenward, thus signifying that devotion to Mary is sublime. Faith teaches us, that Mary is the Mother of God; and reason tells us that after God, the greatest reverence is due to her. This veneration does not consist merely in the imitation of her virtues, but in a special service. The holy Church directed by the Holy Ghost, declared in the Council of Trent, that it is permitted to venerate the Mother of God and to invoke her powerful intercession with Him. She is the holiest of all God's creatures, therefore we honor her more than we do the angels and saints; for, did she not bring forth Him who created the angels, and gave to the saints the grace of sanctification? She certainly bore the Redeemer of our souls, the Saviour of the whole world, without whom we all would have been lost.

This holy Virgin whom the prophets announced, the saints served and the angels venerate, is the same who joyfully exclaimed when she was saluted by St. Elizabeth as the Mother of God, "He that is mighty hath done great things to me, and holy is His name!"[1] Yes, God has exalted her to be Queen of Heaven, therefore the heavenly hosts serve her, because she is the Mother of their King. He has exalted her as Queen of earth, therefore all good men must serve her, for the Lord Himself commended her to them in the person of St. John, from the cross with these words: "Behold thy Mother!"[2] The service of Mary is honorable, because it elevates man to venerate the most exalted of creatures, and through this veneration to adore the Omnipotent Creator.

The Narcissus is white like the immaculate heart of the most pure Virgin, who loves nothing so much as purity, and detests nothing so much as impurity. If, therefore, we wish to please Mary, we must love the virtue of holy purity. Whilst on earth, the blessed Virgin loved two souls in a special manner; they were St. John and Mary Magdalene. Let us preserve our innocence like the former, or if we have unhappily lost it, ever bewail it and carefully avoid all occasions of sin like the latter did. Mary will then most assuredly love us and take us under her motherly protection. A heart which loves Mary

[1] Luke, I, 49.

[2] John, XIX, 27.

must be pure. You may ask me then if sinners are not permitted to call upon her? Not those, indeed, who wish to remain sinners; but the cry of the sinner, acknowledging his misery, regretting his sins, and having the will and desire to amend his evil ways, is not in vain; only in this regard is Mary the Refuge of Sinners; for it will remain forever true, that although Mary is the Refuge of Sinners, she is not an advocate of sin.

The Narcissus has in its center a crown as yellow as gold, which is a symbol of the reward acquired by truly serving the blessed Virgin Mary. The Church applies to Mary these words of Holy Writ: "I love them that love me."[1] And do you think there can be a greater reward in this world, than that of being loved by Mary? Her love, says St. Bernard, is the fullness of grace; how then can that heart languish which has for its own the fountain of all graces? The saints teach us to ask of Mary three special favors, and these she herself likes most to obtain for us from her Divine Son. These graces are conversion, perseverance in good, and a happy death. And is a Christian who obtains these not well rewarded for his love for and devotion to Mary?

The Narcissus is a spring flower, and in the heart that truly loves Mary, a new spiritual spring is awakened. Love of Mary and love of sin cannot

[1] Prov., VIII, 17.

dwell together in the same bosom. If Mary is the conqueror of the heart, the vice of bad habits will be eradicated, tepidity and sloth will vanish, the tempest of passion will become quiet, and the winter of sin will depart. Then the pure vernal air of Divine love will gently blow in the sanctified soul and everything will bloom in the fresh green of filial confidence in Mary. The experience of every century teaches us that the greatest saints and the most brilliant lights of the Church always entertained for Mary, the greatest veneration and most heartfelt devotion; whilst on the other hand, those who ceased to honor the Mother of God began from that very moment to fall away from the faith and to depart from virtue.

O Heavenly Narcissus, most blessed Virgin Mary, obtain for us the grace that in our hearts may ever glow a pure and sincere love for thee. May our devotion and veneration for thee ever remain fresh and active, like nature in spring-time, until that moment when we, through thy love, enter into the eternal Spring in Heaven! Amen.

When winter with its icy blast
And frost and snow is fully past,
Narcissus with its pearly sheen
In stately beauty soon is seen;
It, springing from the wakening earth,
Sheds beauty where before was dearth.

Just so when souls break free from sin,
And pure and contrite lives begin;
The Virgin mild looks down with love,
Upon her children from above,
Forgets that rebels they have been,
She loves the sinner tho' hates sin.

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.

The Sweet Violet.

The Violet is the symbol of humility, and since Mary is called the humble Virgin, St. Bernardine justly styles her the most beautiful Violet. Let us to-day, first of all, take a glance at the earthly violet, then at Mary the heavenly Violet, and lastly at ourselves to see how we may resemble this flower by becoming like Mary truly humble.

The Violet has not the sparkling white of the lily, nor the magnificent crimson of the rose, nor the variegated colors of the tulip. No, its garb is plain and unassuming, for its color is dark-blue without brilliancy or variety. It is a lowly plant which blooms at the feet of its more stately companions. Therefore, it is the emblem of humility, because true humility is simple. Look at Mary, she is the daughter of the kings of Juda, yet she wears a plain, coarse dress. Consider, that she is descended from

the royal house of David, yet she puts her hand to the spindle, and performs the work of the household as the lowest servant. Listen to the words of Mary and you will hear her say: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord;"[1] and again, she sings: "Because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid;"[2] hence, if you wish to be like the Violet and like Mary, you must be humble in your dress as well as in your words and actions. Among the fashions choose always the least conspicuous; in your apparel, always select the most unassuming; and in colors always wear the least remarkable. Remember well the beautiful doctrine of St. Francis de Sales, that the dress is the index of the soul. As merchants advertise outside on their shops what can be had within, so an extravagant dress, not suitable to the station of the wearer, shows that in the soul of the person that wears it, there is little virtue. On the other hand, a clean and simple dress proclaims that beneath it, beats an humble heart. Your words should also be humble. Listen to the opinion of a great master of the spiritual life. He says: As the hunter always speaks of the chase, and the soldier continually recounts the campaigns and battles in which he had been engaged, so the arrogant man always speaks of himself and to his own praise; while the humble man is quiet, never converses of himself, much less speaks in his own praise, and should it happen that

[1] Luke, I, 38. [2] Luke, I, 48.

he is made the topic of conversation he endeavors to change the subject. In all our actions and undertakings humility should shine as the sun reflects through the foliage of the trees. Dear Christians, if we but consider St. Joseph making ploughs, our Divine Saviour gathering shavings, or carrying water, the blessed Virgin spinning and plaiting mats to cover the roof of their humble dwelling; or how they ground their own wheat and barley as St. Ambrose relates, can you then perform your domestic works with reluctance, or despise the low employments of daily life? Should you not rather feel greater joy in accomplishing them the more humble they are? Know then, that such is the life of those possessing true humility, for by this they become like Mary. This thought often induced St. Elizabeth of Hungary to leave her castle bare-footed and in a coarse woolen dress, beg from house to house, and eat with her servants solely that she might resemble Mary by practicing humility, and enjoy the interior delight and beatitude of a truly humble soul.

The Violet grows lowly, its head is always bowed down; and is, therefore, a true emblem of humility. An humble person strives not after honors and renown, or distinction and dignities, but is satisfied with the state, with the office, with the vocation, with the financial standing, with the position in which God has placed him. He is thus extremely happy and requires nothing else. Look at the heavenly Violet, Mary. Is she not of the royal blood of David?

Were not her ancestors kings? Nevertheless, she had not the slightest longing for honors and distinctions; she was well satisfied with her poor cottage, her humble couch, her small income, her poor spouse, and her poor Child. St. Bernard says: "As the only desire of the captive is for liberty; of the sick for health; of the thirsty for a cooling draught; so was for the Mother of God her only joy and only consolation the humble position in which God placed her." If then, you desire to be like Mary, love your station in life, whether it be that of a farmer, a servant, a widow, an invalid or that of a tradesman. Be contented and do not strive ambitiously after a more comfortable condition, for by this you would show that you were not truly humble, and hence you can have no right to Heaven, which is only for the humble.

The Violet has its little head inclined towards the ground, and the heart of the humble is always lowly. Consider Mary when the angel announced to her that she should become the Mother of God; there she knelt, says St. Ambrose, with bowed head saying her evening prayers. Humility is modest in words and looks. And do you know why humility casts the eyes downwards? Because, as St. Bernard says, "Heaven and earth serve to make us humble." Heaven, with its graces and benefits, God, with the weight of his love, press the soul down to the earth which, on seeing it, beholds its kindred dust, whilst all the afflictions which surround it are motives for

humility. Nevertheless, humility does not make us faint-hearted or weak. St. Teresa says: "Humility is truth, and truth makes the will firm as steel." True humility is dauntless, because, knowing its own weakness, it never presumes upon itself, but confides always and only in the strength of God. It is dauntless because confidence imparts love, and love is strong as death. Its glow is like fire; a flame of the Lord. No saint ever arrived at such a high degree of perfection, that we cannot and ought not strive to reach the same. Humility should show us how far we are from our destiny, not, indeed, to dampen our courage, but to inflame our zeal.

O Heavenly Violet, most humble Virgin, obtain for us the virtue of humility, which you always practiced so perfectly; humility, which makes us dear to God and man, and which will open heaven to us; for it is written: "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."[1] Amen.

Thou, lovely Violet, teachest me
A lesson of humility;
Oh! may this virtue ever shine,
In every word and act of mine.

Our Saviour brought it first on earth,
Proclaimed it by His lowly birth,
And on the Cross, He ceased not then
To preach it to the hearts of men.

[1] Luke, XIV, 11.

His holy Mother, as we know,
This virtue did practice here below.
Therefore, the Queen of Heaven is she,
For God exalts humility.

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.

The Sweet Flag.

The Sweet Flag is a beautiful flower well fitted for decorating churches; it is also known as the Indian Water Rose, and sometimes it is called the Shepherd's Crook or Pastoral Staff. It consists of a long stalk with large leaves, graced at the top with a snow-white calix exhaling the most agreeable fragrance. The Sweet Flag is the emblem of Christian education. Parents, you are the shepherds, and your children are the little flocks committed to your care. You should strive to be good pastors after the example of Jesus Christ, who sought for the lost sheep over mountains and valleys, neither resting nor sleeping until he had found it. You should be good shepherds, because the Lord has purchased these lambs with His precious blood, and they are only lent to you as so many pledges of His love. O how much God loves children! Open the Bible and read how He rescued little Moses from the waters, how He compassionated the languishing Ismael, for

"God heard the voice of the boy;"[1] and further, see how He protected little Jacob, the son of Rebecca, saying: "Jacob I have loved!"[2] and we also read of little Samuel that he was loved by the Lord his God. Our Saviour, Himself, said: "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not,"[3] and "Woe to him that scandalizes one of these little ones;" again, "Unless you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven."[4] From all these passages we see clearly, the truth of these words of St. Paul: "If any man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."[5] Yes, says St. Chrysostom, "the greater God's love for children, the more severe will be the account which parents will have to render on the day of Judgment."

The Sweet Flag is white, and warns parents to keep a watchful eye upon their children, that they may preserve their innocence. The Divine Mother did not leave her child, but remained always by His side. And once, when He had remained in Jerusalem, because it was His Father's will, how untiringly she sought Him for three days and three nights until she found Him again. Do those parents resemble this Divine Mother, who leave their children by themselves unguarded? Who are not con-

[1] Gen., XXI, 17.
[2] Rom., IX, 13.
[3] Math., XIX, 14.
[4] Math., XXIII, 3.
[5] I Tim., V, 8.

cerned about those with whom they have intercourse; what they speak about, or where they idle their time? Who allow them to roam about in the streets after dark? Of what use, then, are the most salutary laws of spiritual and temporal superiors, if there are such careless parents? But God, who has said that: "For every idle word that man shall speak, he shall render an account,"[1] will, on that day when, at the sound of the trumpet, the dead will rise from their graves and assemble for judgment, in the valley of Josephat, demand His children from thee, O father, O mother; then will those hiding places where your children were seduced through your carelessness; those streets and by-paths where the first germs of evil were implanted in their hearts, and those houses and places whither you permitted them to go and stay unguarded, until late in the night, rise and give testimony against you. Oh! how quickly will then disappear, like rain drops in the ocean, those wicked words with which many parents try to excuse themselves, saying: "I cannot be everywhere; I have seen nothing; I cannot always keep them at home; they are old enough and know what they ought to do." Philip, Crown-prince of France, once said to his father, St. Louis: "Thou art my good shepherd, watch over me that I may not be lost." Thus, each little child in its cradle speaks to its parents, as folding its hands it looks up imploringly into the faces

[1] Math., XII, 36.

of those who love it so dearly saying, as it were, "Parents, dear parents, be good shepherds to me." Then, woe to you if you despise this silent supplication of your child, if through your fault the light of faith is extinguished, or its white garment of innocence soiled by sin. Preserve the innocence of your children even at the risk of your own lives. Be strict, watchful and conscientious in your duties towards them. Say, as Queen Blanch did to her son Louis: "My son, God knows how much I love you, but I would rather see you dead at my feet than guilty of one mortal sin." These words of his holy mother rang continually in the ears of the pious king as he himself confessed; he seemed still to hear her sweet voice uttering them while in the tempest of the ocean before the island of Cypress, in his captivity among the Saracens, and in the last moments of his life at Tunis; for in a loving heart a mother's counsel will never die.

The Sweet Flag has an agreeable perfume, and symbolizes the sweet odor of good example. Children are not only educated by the teacher, the priest, or the books, but also by the good example of their parents. Great, indeed, was the power of faith in St. Gregory Thaumaturgus when he said to the mountain: "Move thyself away from here;" and, in obedience to his command, it was done. But greater yet is the power of good example. It, too, performs miracles, especially when given by parents. If the parents say their morning and evening prayers,

go to church willingly, frequently receive the holy sacraments, and live together in harmony, the children will do the same. But if the father mocks at religion and refuses to pray, if the mother quarrels and disputes continually with him, if both scold and curse, how can the children do otherwise? The children are the counterparts of their parents; as merchants put out signs to show what they have for sale, so the morals of the children generally indicate the virtues or vices of their parents. The Apostle of the Anglo-Saxons, St. Augustine, said once to the Britons: "Help me to convert the Saxons;" they refused, after which the Saint said: "Because you will not assist me in showing the way of life to the Saxons, they will become unto you by the just judgment of God, the instruments of death." This is fulfilled in many parents who, instead of showing their children the way of life, by good example, become a scandal to them; their own children will be to them instruments of death. Therefore, parents, do not blame any one else but yourselves for the sorrow you feel for a degenerated son or daughter. Ascribe it to nothing else, but to your own bad example. You aimed an arrow at your child by your abominable words and curses uttered in its presence, by your discord and dissension, by your nocturnal rioting and drunkenness, and by your tepidity in regard to religion; and this arrow will return to pierce your own heart. O parents, be like the flower, Sweet Flag, a delicious odor of good ex-

ample to your children, and as this flower is narrow below, and widens as it grows upward, so in like manner you should close their young hearts to the world, and open them for heaven; train them to be pious and virtuous. Which do you prefer, that they should go to the graveyard and curse you in your graves, because, by your bad example, they became wicked themselves, because, through your weakness and indulgence they perished morally; or, that they should kneel at your graves, praying and moistening them with tears of grateful love, because, by a strict Christian education, you have established the happiness of their lives? Which do you prefer, parents, choose! Pray, therefore, every day to the most holy Mother Mary, who has given us the most beautiful and sublime example of a good education, that she may obtain for you, from God, the grace to bring up your children, so that none of them will be lost through your fault; and that all may be again united with you in Heaven. Amen.

Parents, ne'er forget your duty,
Lead your children virtue's way;
That their souls adorned with beauty,
Heavenward tend from day to day.

See their young hearts like a garden,
Where the weeds will freely start;
You be watchful, ne'er permit them
To take root within the heart.

God above is ever watching,
And your efforts will reward;
So take courage, do your duty
Even though the task be hard.

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.

The Geranium.

The Geranium is a plant which we see very frequently. We see it adorning the windows of almost every house; it makes the room of the rich man and the little chamber of the poor man bright and cheerful. It is, therefore, the emblem of domestic happiness. In every Christian family there should ever exist that same good feeling and love for each other that shone forth so conspicuously in the most holy family on earth; namely, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. O happy Nazareth, thou hast seen the lowly hut in which dwelt the peace of God, the happy home in which three persons spent their time between work and prayer! Here St. Joseph, the diligent artisan manufactured ploughs, yokes and wagons, as St. Justin says. Again we find him on Mount Carmel busily engaged in cutting down the high sycamore and terebinths growing there. Small was the income he received for his labor, but even this he shared with the poor. Mary was very dili-

gent in performing her household duties, and without neglecting any of them she still found time to read the Holy Scriptures. Her whole conversation was in Heaven. To her can be applied the beautiful words of the Psalmist: "All the glory of the king's daughter is within."[1] She plaited the mats which covered the roof of their humble dwelling, from the leaves of the date-palm, or from the rushes that grew by the Jordan. Jesus Christ, the witness of His holy Mother's unwearied devotedness to her duties, has, at times, alluded to it in his parables. Mary's simple occupations are interlaced in the Gospel narratives like aquatic flowers in amber. There we find records of the diligent woman mixing the leaven in three measures of meal, and sweeping the house carefully to find the lost groat, and again she is busily engaged in patching an old and well-worn garment. When Jesus applied a parable to recommend purity of heart, He referred to the cleanliness of one who purifies the cup carefully inside and out. We can easily perceive that He thought of Mary, when He praised the widow who gave the mite, not out of her superfluity, but from her great poverty. Jesus, too, while yet a child, took the axe and followed His foster-father to assist him in his work. Jesus, Mary and Joseph labored hard; and these great souls who could have commanded legions of angels asked nothing else of God, but their daily bread.

[1] Ps. XLIV, 14.

The Geranium is found in almost every household, so too, should be found in every house the quiet of domestic happiness, a pious Christian life. For Mary this was undoubtedly the happiest time of her life. Although deprived of all comforts of the rich, it was granted to her to have her Son always before her eyes; with Him she could live, for Him she could work and reflect how to prepare joys. And in this, dear Christian, lies the secret of our own happiness! To live for Jesus is the source of all contentment and of domestic peace. And as we see that the Geranium blooms in the most beautiful colors, white, rose-colored, violet and crimson, so, too, should you, O Christian soul, every hour of the day, and in all the different circumstances of your life, glow with love for Jesus, be united to Him most intimately by prayer, for it is the bond which unites heaven and earth. This holy bond should unite you and yours in family prayers night and morning, as well as before and after meals; for has our Lord not said: "When there are two or three assembled in my name, there am I in the midst of them."[1] You should also be united to Him as often as possible in that ruby-gemmed circlet, the holy sacrifice of Mass, the unbloody renewal of the sacrifice of Calvary. Let no day pass without at least some one of your family assisting at this wonderful mystery. "Nothing will cause us greater regret

[1] Math., XVIII, 20.

when we come to die than the graces we lost through our own neglect and tepidity," says St. Ignatius. Work for God, and in His holy presence, for, "Wherever you are and whatever you do, God your Father seeth you." Make a good intention in the morning and often renew it during the day. "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do it all for the greater honor and glory of God."[1] Make use of some such aspirations as these: "O Jesus, for love of thee! O Lord, give me patience! Sweetest Jesus, stay with me! for where Thou art, O Jesus," says the Imitation of Christ, "there is Heaven; but where Thou art not is hell." Jesus says, of those who love: "We will come to him, and will make our abode with him."[2] When Jesus comes, His peace and blessing come also. Why do you seek men so much, since everything depends on God? "If you do not want to lose peace in your home," says blessed Egidius, "you must fasten two locks on the door; one is named, 'Go seldom out,' the other, 'Let little in.'" A great spiritual man has said: "As often as I go abroad, I return less a man." No place is better for you than your own home. Take a lesson from the bees. There was once a man who wished to observe these insects at their work, and caused a glass hive to be made for them; the bees quickly covered it with wax on the inside so that he could not possibly see what they

[1] I Cor., X, 31. [2] John, XIV, 23.

did. In like manner you should draw the veil of retirement, the veil of solitude, around your home, for the more retired you live, the happier and more peaceful you will be. Remain alone with your family, alone with Jesus, and you will experience the truth of that saying of St. Bernard: "I am never less alone, than when I am alone!" Walk with Jesus, you and your family, then in your household will ever bloom the hopeful green Geranium of a Christian family life, it will become a second house of Nazareth, where Jesus will hear the prayers, Mary will deal out holy joys, and St. Joseph will bless the work. It will, in truth, become a Jacob's ladder upon which the angels will descend and ascend to join your hearts and those of your family to the Divine heart.

The Geranium does not lose its green color even in winter; neither did the Holy Family lose their tranquillity and sweet happiness in poverty or misfortune. We no longer behold it in the house at Nazareth; but find it in a strange country, at Heliopolis, in Egypt. Here Mary had to descend into the furnace of poverty, and was encompassed by misery on all sides. The gold of the holy Three Kings was exhausted, and they were reduced to such extreme want that the son of David had to toil as a day-laborer, and the daughter of the kings of Juda to work entire nights to increase the pay of her spouse. Landolphus of Saxony says that, "the

Child often with tears, asked the Mother for bread, and she had nothing to give, but tears; still she was contented and happy for Jesus was with her." To suffer for Jesus is, indeed, great consolation, and to suffer with Him is joy.

There are sometimes sufferings in families caused by crosses within, and afflictions from without. There is a remedy for both in these consoling words: "He who can kiss the hand of God with equanimity, as well in adversity as in prosperity, has reached a high degree of perfection."

O let us beg of our blessed Lady, to obtain for us the grace to live and suffer for Jesus, so that domestic peace may abide in our family-circles.

Geranium with thy green leaves bright,
Welcome, welcome to my sight!
Thou art like the peaceful dove,
Nestled down mid home and love.

Thou dost speak of family bliss,
What can be compared to this?
Thou, O Mary intercede,
That our homes be blest, indeed!

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

The Immortelle.

The Everlasting or Straw-flower is white and yellow, and has the peculiar property of never fading. This never-fading flower is therefore, a fitting emblem of Heaven whose joys will endure forever. "The good," says Jesus Christ, "shall enter into eternal joys:"[1] and the apostle St. Paul says: "For we know that if our earthly house of this habitation be dissolved, that we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in heaven."[2]

The blessed Virgin is like this beautiful flower. Her works and her desires were everlasting, that is she worked for Heaven, she longed for Heaven, and therefore, her works are imperishable and the reward of her longing, eternal beatitude. O that I may succeed to-day by considering the flower, Everlasting, in writing with indelible characters what the great Archbishop of Cologne, Clement Augustus, once wrote in his friend's album: "By good works and aspirations you will become immortal here and hereafter."

The seemless garment of Jesus, which was spun and woven by the Blessed Mother herself, has been wonderfully preserved even unto our own times. That coat for which the executioners cast lots at the

[1] Math., XXV, 46. [2] II Cor., V, 1.

cruxifixion of Christ, is preserved at Treves to-day. Some years ago, when it was exposed for public veneration, more than four millions of pilgrims assembled there. This garment woven in one piece is, as the holy Fathers say, a symbol of the one, undivided, holy Church. But it is also a beautiful representation of the incorruptible and immortal works of Mary. She did not work and act for this world, but for Heaven. Therefore, wherever the name of Mary is announced, whether it be in the ice-fields of the North, or under the fervid sky of Brazil, on the shores of the Nile, or on the coast of the China Sea, everywhere the things which Mary did are made known. Her pious conduct in the temple, her retired life with St. Joseph, her motherly care of Jesus, her visit to St. Elizabeth, her active and laborious life at Nazareth and in Egypt, her love for her neighbor at the marriage-feast in Cana, her perfect resignation on Mount Calvary, her faithful friendship for St. John and St. Mary Magdalene, her support of the Infant Church by her wise counsels, and in fact all her good works will not pass away; they will last forever and ever, they are so many immortelles which will never fade.

Thus should we, following the example of Mary, work, not for this world, but for Heaven. The Lord admonishes us to do this in these words: "Lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither the moth nor the rust will consume, and where thieves

cannot steal."[1] But, alas! we might shed tears of blood for the Christians of to-day, when we behold how solicitous they are for everything else, rather than for Heaven. How they exert themselves only for the body which will soon perish in the grave, while for their immortal souls they do absolutely nothing; yet for their souls they must give a strict account on the day of Judgment. All their efforts, labors and actions tend only to obtain temporal goods and earthly advantages, which are nothing but bubbles that burst asunder by the air, or they fly like chaff before the wind, and again they may be compared to drops of water, which disappear in the ocean of eternity. You can take nothing with you to the tomb, but your good or bad works, and woe to you if your wicked deeds are more numerous than your good ones! Therefore, dearly beloved, do you at least, act wisely, work for Heaven alone. Say with the great painter Correggio: "I paint not for time, but for eternity." There was once a funeral procession passing through the streets of Vienna, but what do I say, a funeral procession, there was not any; for the dead man was poor and unknown, and all that were following him to his last resting-place, were the good priest and the pall-bearers. The Emperor, Francis I, happened to pass that way in his carriage, and seeing this poor obscure funeral, alighted and walked behind the coffin. Soon the cry

[1] Math., VI, 20.

was heard throughout the city, that the Emperor was assisting at the funeral. Instantly many thousand people joined him in honoring the deceased, and by the time they reached the place of burial the crowd was immense and could not be numbered. Vienna had never before beheld such a large funeral procession, and as long as the city stands it will be remembered and spoken of. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for their works follow them." This will also be fulfilled in you, dear Christians, if you work for Heaven, for your good works will follow you like that multitude of people which followed the corpse of that poor man to the grave; and they will erect to your memory a monument which time cannot destroy; they will place upon your grave a wreath of immortelles, which will never fade. Yes, your pious prayers, your holy Communions, all will follow you; the poor whom you fed and clothed, the sick whom you visited and comforted, the child whom you adopted, the sinner whom you converted from his evil ways, the tears of distress which you wiped away, the wounds which you healed, the alms you gave to the poor, the decoration of altars, the ornaments of the church which you procured, the Christian sodalities which you encouraged; these will be the string of pearls and the chain of gold, which will unite time and eternity, and will secure for you, even here on earth, an imperishable remembrance. All else will be forgotten on earth and will not be rewarded in

Heaven. Only good deeds are Immortelles in this life, for they die not; they are Immortelles in heaven for their reward is eternal life.

After the death of Christ, Mary went with St. John to Ephesus in Asia Minor; but before she died she wished to behold again her native land. St. John hastened to gratify her desire and took her to Jerusalem. We, too, should long for our true fatherland, Heaven. With St. Paul, we should cry out: "Who will release me from the body of this death!"[1] We should sigh with St. Augustine: "O country of rest, how do I long for thee! O my heavenly home, from the shores of this life, I lift up my eyes full of desire after thee!" St. Ambrose says: "The greatness of our reward and the certainty of it will be proportioned to the intensity of our desire for it." When the holy hermit St. Arsenius, approached death, his brethren asked him to give them some salutary advice as a memorial and farewell. He said only these two words, "there, where," and departed. The brethren requested a venerable servant of God to explain the meaning of these two words. He replied: "They mean nothing else but, that our hearts should be already there where the purest joys are found, and are waiting for us."

O Heavenly Immortelle, most blessed Virgin Mary, you who are now happy in Heaven, because while on earth you worked and acted only for

[1] Rom., VII, 24.

Heaven; obtain for us the grace that we, too, may secure our salvation, by good works and by our earnest longings for eternal life. Amen.

What strengthens so the Christian heart?
What makes his mind as firm as steel?
'Tis longing for that "Better part"
Which each within himself doth feel.
'Tis many good works nobly done,
'Tis many a hard-fought battle won,
'Tis ending well, what's well begun.

'Tis ever striving for the right,
'Tis walking spotless in God's sight,
Aided by celestial light.
This gives an ardent thirst to drink
At the Eternal Fountain's brink,
Where Living Waters ever well,
Where blooms the Heavenly Immortelle.

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

The White Rose.

The White Rose is a Beautiful flower, and as it is extremely hardy, it can be cultivated without much trouble. It is an appropriate emblem of the joys of Mary, and as such we will consider it to-day.

History relates of that noble Roman lady Lucretia, that when she was once asked to show her treasures and jewels, she brought in her children, saying: "These are my treasures." If we ask that best of mothers, the blessed Virgin Mary to tell us what her joys are, she will answer: "They are Jesus and you." Cast a glance at Mary in the stable at Bethlehem. See how she kneels before her new-born Babe, embraces and kisses it; clasps it in her arms, fondles and caresses it; how she bends over it most lovingly, whilst all the time her heart beats rapidly, her eyes sparkle and her cheeks glow. Who is that child? It is Jesus, her joy, her only joy.

We read of St. Mary Magdalene when in the deepest sorrow and affliction on account of the death of Christ, she wandered about the garden in great perplexity, having no other expression for her grief than bitter tears and the words: "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him."[1] On turning round she saw Jesus who said to her, "Mary;" then she recognized Him, and untold joy filled her soul. Her sorrow was now passed, her grief assuaged, her trouble gone, her complaint hushed. Dear friends, comprehend now, if you can, the transports of joy experienced by the most holy heart of Mary, when the Babe in the manger, stretching its little hands longingly towards her, saluted her for the first time with the sweet

[1] John, XX, 13.

name of mother. The angels counted the pulsations of her delighted heart, and the blessed spirits of Heaven gathered her tears of joy in that holy moment.

Anna, the mother of the good Tobias, watched daily from the top of a hill for her son's return. At length she saw him afar off, and presently recognizing him, she probably returned home crying out: "It is he; it is my child, my comfort, the light of my eyes, the staff of my old age!" Dear Christians, this joy is merely a shadow in comparison with that felt by Mary, when after three days and nights, full of sorrow and anxiety, she found her beloved Child teaching in the temple. St. Bernard says: "Mary's joy surpasses all comprehension; for it was a joy, which no human tongue can adequately express."

Represent to yourselves, dear Christians, an earthly mother whose son is at length ordained priest, and about to offer to God, for the first time the holy sacrifice of the Mass. What passes in the heart of this mother, when she beholds him, robed in sacerdotal vestments, blessing the kneeling multitude; when she sees him ascend the steps of the altar whereon he will offer the immaculate Victim. What are her feelings, when on this day of honor, she first receives his blessing, and during the holy sacrifice, holy Communion from his hand; and lastly, what joy pervades her soul, as she hears him, for the first time announce the word of God. All who know her envy her the happiness of being the mother of

a priest. Now, she even sheds tears of joy, and remembers no more the cares and sorrows of the past; she now feels amply rewarded for all her care, trouble and anxiety undergone for him, and for all the expense incurred.

Do you believe, dear Christians, that you can in the least comprehend the great joy of the blessed Virgin, when Jesus entered upon His office of teacher; and visited her at Nazareth, when she beheld Him sit upon the same mat that He did, when He was yet a child; when she saw Him eat; when she beheld Him approaching the bed of the sick whom He restored to health; and again, imparting to thousands who flocked to hear Him, the words of eternal life; wiping away their tears and healing their wounds. We may form a faint idea of her joy; but we are utterly unable to understand, and fully comprehend it; for to do this it would be necessary to have the same holy maternal love, the same glowing filial love.

If Ingeburgis, Queen of Castile, had to be forced from the grave of her son, lest she should die of grief, what must have been the sorrow that pierced the heart of Mary at the sepulchre of such a Son as Jesus. Let us imagine the joy on meeting Him again after His resurrection. Whilst the other holy women gathered about the empty sepulchre, she stood immovable with joy under an olive tree at some distance from them. There was a young man speaking to her in a subdued voice. Who was He

then that thus gave her such great delight? He was, indeed, her beloved Son, the glorious conqueror of hell; He had come to console and comfort His much afflicted Mother. What passed at this holy meeting, was never made known, but this is certain that Mary, whose soul withstood a supernatural sorrow, felt also a joy we could not experience and live. After this Mary, like a weary reaper, who searches for rest and shade from the mid-day heat, began to sigh for the cool shade of the Tree of Life, which grows on the throne of God, and to thirst for the fountains of living water. After years of long desire, her request was granted. At her death she saw the heavens open and the Son of Man coming upon a cloud of light. What a joy! At this sight her countenance became ruddy, and her eyes sparkled with the lustre of a mother's love, and a mother's joy; and adoring, she went over into eternity, to her Son, chanting her song of joy: "My soul doth magnify the Lord; and my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour."[1]

Dear Christians, these are some of the great joys Mary had with Jesus, but forget not that we are also a joy to her.

You all know that we are children of Mary, because she was destined to be the Mother of the whole human race; and you know it also, by the words of Jesus on the Cross: "Behold thy Mother!"[2] That we, as her children, are a joy to her I will

[1] Luke, I, 46, 47. [2] John, XIX, 27.

endeavor to prove to you. We resemble her Jesus because we are created according to His image; we have the same garb as Jesus; because He has taken upon himself our human nature. The blood of her beloved Child has cleansed our souls; and our home is the same as that of her Son Jesus, Heaven. This resemblance in form, occupation and destination creates even on earth a joyful feeling. Mary once said to St. Bridget: "Know my daughter, that the children of men are my greatest joy." Yet, dear Christians, how is this joy infinitely increased in the motherly heart of Mary, if to this more external resemblance is joined the interior of a pious and virtuous life; if our hearts are White Roses, white in purity of purpose, and green in unshaken confidence in the love of Mary. Then, dear Christians, will her heart exult in joy and, as St. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians: "You are our glory and our joy."[1] So will Mary say to you: "You are my joy; my greatest joy."

During the thirty years that St. Augustine lived a life of sin, he cost his mother the bitterest tears, the most heartfelt grief; but, when he was converted, he cast himself down before her, and implored her forgiveness. He cried out: "Thou hast borne me in sorrow, but I did not thank thee, thou hast brought me forth again by thy tears and prayers, now I will be thy joy, and forever remain thy con-

[1] I Thess., II, 20.

solation." My dear friends, recognize yourselves in Augustine, for has not Mary's tears and prayers regenerated you all to a better life? Raised you from vice and the misery of sin? Now, then with Augustine cry out: "Henceforth I will be thy joy in gratitude for thy great love. I will pray diligently and often receive the holy Sacraments: I will avoid occasions of sin and especially flee from all impurity. In all my needs I will confidently call upon thee to assist me, I will give alms for the love of thee. I will visit the sick and practice works of mercy; I will make it my constant study to give thee joy, O sweetest Mother! Then will the White Rose, emblem of thy joy, bloom in my heart; and as the Eternal Father called down from Heaven, at the baptism of Jesus: 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,'[1] so wilt thou say of me: 'This is my beloved child in whom I find my joy.'" Amen.

Behold the White and spotless Rose,
Fair emblem of that peerless one;
Whom God the Eternal Father chose,
To be the Mother of His Son.

O Virgin Mother, highly blest!
No human tongue can tell thy joy,
When folded to thy holy breast
Thou held'st thy beauteous, heavenly Boy.

[1] Math., XVII, 5.

Strange privilege, fair Maid, was thine,
O who can know thy untold bliss,
When those sweet lips and brow Divine,
Were thine to gaze on, thine to kiss!

This blessed Babe was all thine own,
And well might angels envy thee,
When of thy arms He formed a throne
And sweet caresses gave to thee.

THIRTIETH DAY.

The Honeysuckle.

Already the month of May draws to a close, and with it the beautiful days which we sanctified by offering flowers to the Sacred Heart of Mary. Therefore, I cannot let this Devotion close without earnestly recommending to you the practice of that virtue, without which all others are nothing. This virtue is perseverance in the love of Mary. As its symbol, we will take the Honeysuckle. It is a well-known climbing-plant, generally found covering arbors and summer-houses. Its blossoms are very fragrant and mostly of a white, yellow or red color. This flower is also called the Rose of Jericho, and may, therefore, be a fitting emblem of the blessed

Mother of God, whom, as you all know, the holy Fathers call by this title.

The Honeysuckle is the emblem of Perseverance. The longer we contemplate this flower, the better we like it, on account of its sweet and delightful odor which it diffuses at all times, but especially in the evening. The blessed Virgin, as it were, cries out to us through this plant: "The longer you love me, the dearer you are to me! The longer you venerate me, the more pleasing you are to me! The longer you are my child, the more willingly will I be your Mother, both here and in eternity!"

O dear Christians, let not this voice call to us in vain; for it is the voice of that Mother who says: "Come, my child, accept my counsel, and save your soul, by faithfully persevering in my love till death," as she once said to St. Joseph of Cupertino.

Do you not all wish to save your immortal souls, to go to Heaven? Most certainly, every one of you will answer me in the affirmative. Well, then, mark down deeply within your heart, the following words of St. Augustine: "If one has a great love and devotion for the blessed Virgin Mary, it is a sure sign of predestination for Heaven." Another Saint has said: "That to practice some devotion in honor of Mary, be it ever so little, if persevered in will be enough to save you."

It once happened that a young man who was leading a frivolous life, was about leaving his native city, when he heard that missionaries had arrived

there to give a mission. He was about to procure a seat in the stage-coach when he found himself detained by something he could not explain. An interior voice and an irresistible influence forced him to stay and hear a sermon. He did so, and was so touched by the words of the good missionary, that he remained to hear all the rest. He made a general confession of his whole life, with unmistakable signs of a most sincere contrition. His confessor asked him whether he loved and practiced devotion to Mary, the Mother of God. He replied: "I have forgotten all prayers, I cannot even recite the Our Father any more; only the Hail Mary, I recited daily, because my dying mother had told me to do so."

Dearly beloved, do you not think it was the daily reciting of the Hail Mary that was the means of this young man's conversion? Yes, it certainly was the anchor which saved his soul from shipwreck in the storms of this life. The Hail Mary was the star which guided him to a better life; it was the chain by which Mary drew him from the brink of the abyss to her maternal heart and to the bosom of his Heavenly Father.

Make, then, the firm resolution to practice faithfully your devotions in honor of Mary, however insignificant they may seem to be. Perseverance will give a value to them, and perhaps God has ordained that by this devotion you will be eternally saved.

Does Mary only deserve to be loved by us during the short period of a month? Does she not rather deserve a love sincere and faithful unto death? Did she not love us when she was yet a child! when for our sakes she dedicated herself to God in the temple? Did she not love us in her girlhood, when for our salvation she bore the Son of God? Did she not love us in her maturer years, when she willingly permitted her Divine Son to be immolated on the Cross for us? Did she not love us in her old age, living even till sixty-seven years on earth for the good of our souls? Does she not love us now from her heavenly throne with a love extending from the cradle to the grave?

Have you ever seen those silvery threads in autumn which fly about in the air and adhere to the clothes? Naturalists have not succeeded yet in fully explaining the cause of them. A pious legend calls them "Threads which the Mother of God has spun." They are a beautiful representation of the benefits and favors with which she overwhelms man even when he is undeserving of them. She obtains many graces for him, although he wishes them not, and never thanks her for them. Go out to the meadows in spring and summer and count the leaves and blossoms. You will answer, that it is impossible, for they are far too numerous; well, this is true, and I admit it, but even so countless and beyond measure are the benefits and tokens of Mary's love to us.

Therefore, love Mary with a faithful, persevering eternal love. When the famine had passed from the land of Juda, Noemi wished to return to her native country. Her two daughters-in-law, Orpha and Ruth, accompanied her. When they had traveled about half the distance, Noemi said: "Now return home, I will find the way alone. I thank you for the love you have shown me." Orpha let herself be persuaded, but Ruth would not. She answered: "No, whithersoever thou goest, I will go; where thou dwellest I will also dwell. Thy people shall be my people; and thy God my God; the land that shall receive thee dying, in the same will I die, and there will I be buried."[1]

Behold, dear Christians, in this beautiful picture a representation of what our love towards Mary should be. Let us also say to the blessed Virgin: "No, Mother, nothing shall ever separate us from thee. We will love and serve thee all the days of our lives. There, where thou dwellest, is our most beloved and happy abode. Those who love thee, shall be our friends likewise. We will be thine living and dying, in time and eternity."

You know, dear friends, from Holy Scripture how Josue said: "Move not, O sun, towards Gabaon, nor thou, O moon, towards the valley of Ajalon!"[2] and that the sun and moon stood still for the space of one day. Had I such strong faith as Josue, I

[1] Ruth, I, 16, 17. [2] Josue, X, 12.

would cry out: "O month of May, move not, depart not; O month, in which your love and devotion to Mary has shown itself so beautiful and so touching, remain forever." Dear Christians, never allow this love for Mary to grow cold, never be unfaithful in your devotions to her, and you will be abundantly rewarded, when through love of her, you shall enter the gates of the heavenly Paradise, there to remain in unchangeable bliss forevermore. Amen.

Lord, before thy throne we kneel,
To thy power we appeal,
Make our hearts as firm as steel
To do battle for the right.
Suffer not our souls to quail,
Never let our courage fail,
Uphold us in Thy might!

Mary, lovely flower fair,
Ever for us have a care,
Till to Heaven our souls you bear,
Safe to thy dear Son.
Help us ever during life,
Filled with anxious care and strife,
Till our victory's won.

THIRTY-FIRST DAY.

The Forget-me-not.

The wreath which we have been twining during this sweet month of Mary is almost finished. Only one flower is wanting to complete it. This last one, we will cull from the banks of our rivers and streamlets where it grows very abundantly. It is the pretty blue-eyed Forget-me-not, which seems to greet us so kindly with its sweet smile of gladness. There is a pious legend which relates that the Lord created it last of all the flowers, and gave to it its name, which should ever remind us that amid earth's beauties we should not forget the Creator.

The Forget-me-not is a lovely flowret, and speaks to us of the heavenly Forget-me-not, Mary, whom the Church salutes with the title, "Virgo Amabilis," "Virgin most Amiable." Mary is lovely and she loves us. By the word lovely is signified the union of the beauty of the body with that of the soul; the blending of the exterior beauty with that of the interior; and this we find perfect in Mary. She was so beautiful in person, said St. Dionysius, who was contemporary with her, that "I would have adored her as a deity, had I known that she was the Mother of Jesus. We are told that in her advanced age, even on her death-bed, she was still admirably beautiful; for, neither time nor death ventured to change this elect vessel of grace. Her soul was so

beautiful, that these words of Holy Scripture refer to her: "All the glory of the king's daughter is within."[1] Her heart was the throne of all virtues. Do you desire humility? Meditate on the demeanor of Mary when with bowed head she said to the Angel: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord."[2] Do you wish for holy charity? Think of her journey to Elizabeth, and her request at the marriage-feast at Cana. Would you like to possess the virtue of gratitude? Mark the rejoicing of her grateful soul in the Canticle: "My soul doth magnify the Lord."[3] Do you desire resignation? Behold how she stands beneath the Cross of her Divine Son, broken-hearted, yet resigned to God's most holy Will. Therefore, St. Anselm is right in saying: "Mary was the most beautiful creature that ever proceeded from the creating hand of God, because in her were united in inexpressible harmony such beauty of soul and body, that she never had an equal. Mary loves us, will she not accomplish the words of her Divine Son: "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples if you have love one for another,"[4] will not she who once said: "Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye."[5] Will she not fulfil that last wish of her dying Son: "Woman behold thy Son!"[6] Yes, Mary loves us, and we find in Holy Scripture the gradual progress of her maternal love for us in

[1] Ps. XLIV, 14.
[2] Luke, I, 38.
[3] Luke, I, 46.
[4] John, XIII, 35.
[5] John, XII, 5.
[6] John, XIX, 26.

these words which holy Church applies to Mary: "I love those that love me;"[1] again, "I am found without trouble by those who love me," further, "I come to meet those who call upon me," and, "I anticipate those who desire me, and show myself to them first." Dear Christians, on hearing this, are your hearts not touched, nay, even carried away by the great love of Mary towards you? Must you not cry out with St. Thomas of Villanova: "O Mary, when I consider thy immeasurable love towards me, I become dazzled as though I had gazed on the splendor of the mid-day sun; and quite overcome I cast my weeping eyes upon the earth!"

The Forget-me-not grows very abundantly, and reminds us of the many graces which we receive through Mary. She, herself, is full of grace as the Angel declared when he saluted her: "Hail, full of grace!" Yes, she is a marvel of grace. For love of her, God abrogated the most universal, the most absolute laws of nature. Mary remained a virgin before, in, and after the birth of her Divine Son, a privilege granted to none other. Mary brought forth her Son without pain, weakness, or affliction, although Holy Scripture says: "In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children."[2] Mary lived without any sin, even without any wilful imperfection, although it is written: "Every man is a sinner." Mary died without sadness, fear, anxiety or struggle,

[1] Prov., VIII, 17. [2] Gen., III, 16.

although nature is terrified at the approach of death. The body of Mary escaped the corruption of the tomb, although God Himself had said: "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return."[1] Mary became the Mother of her Creator, and He obeyed her, His own creature. Mary was conceived without sin, although we must all say: "We are conceived in sin."[2] This sublime and exceptional grace, God never gave to any other human being, nor will He ever grant it to another. God, also, bestowed this grace upon Mary at a time when she could neither ask for, nor acquire it. Dear Christians, do you think that God would now refuse her a grace? O, certainly, He would not. If Mary petitions for anything she will obtain it. Therefore, it is true that Mary is all-powerful through the power of her intercession, as God is all-powerful through the power of His essence. Hence, St. Anselm calls her "the supplicatory omnipotence." She is the Mother of grace for us. Holy Scripture says: "In me is all grace of the way."[3] The holy Fathers salute her as the Mother of grace, the treasurer and dispenser of heavenly gifts. St. Bernard says: "That all graces received from God, are imparted to us through Mary."

The Forget-me-not is blue, and this blue color reminds us of the heavens of which it is said:

[1] Gen., III, 19.
[2] Ps. L, 7.
[3] Eccl., XXIV, 25.

"The good will enter into eternal joys." Dear Christians, have a longing for Heaven, for "the greater your desire for it," says St. Teresa, "the more certainty there is of your one day entering it." Blessed are they who ardently desire Heaven, for they shall one day possess it! And, why, dearly beloved, should you not long for Heaven and eternal, imperishable joys; now, at this moment, which calls unto you, louder and stronger than ever before; that on earth all passes away quickly.

Now, this beautiful time of grace is past, this glorious month during which you so often visited this church, knelt before this altar, and prayed before the Madonna. Yes, the month is past, but during it a new spring of love and devotion for Mary was awakened in your hearts. The time is past which united so many thousand souls in one purpose, to venerate Mary, and imitate her glorious virtues! Thus all passes away. Therefore, while we say farewell to this lovely month and sacred shrine, let us lift up our hearts to Heaven, where joys will last forever, and love is imperishable. If you really wish to go to Heaven, love and venerate the Blessed Virgin every day of your life; for St. Alphonsus says: "A true servant of Mary can not perish."

O thou heavenly Forget-me-not, most blessed Virgin Mary, do not forget us who have woven this wreath of flowers in thy honor, which we place here on thy altar. Obtain for us by thy powerful intercession, that they may never fade, and that the

virtues which they represent may shine forth in our lives, and that through thee we may come to Jesus, to whom be praise and glory forever! Amen.

Our wreath is finished, O Mother dear!
Upon thy altar we place it here,
Its flowers we've culled with zealous care,
It tells of the love for thee we bear.

Accept the wreath your children wove,
'Twas made with grateful, trusting love;
And while we lay it at your feet,
"Forget-me-not" the flowers repeat.

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